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PROGS & UTILITIES

for Spectrum,
CBM 64, Oric,
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No.7
OCT

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A Space Odyssey

by KEVIN FLYNN

A four part arcade style space adventure that takes you into another galaxy ...

PART
1

Sentinel
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PART
2

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PART
3

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PART
4

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The Great Space Race is that much-specified upon entity — the follow-up to Legend's highly innovative, highly successful 'computer movie' (their description) *Valhalla*.

Out go any traces of Norse gods, myths, legends and graphic adventure elements and in comes the hi-tech world of the future in what looks to be a very sophisticated arcade game with strategy overtones and single key-press commands. As usual Legend are saying little, grinning a lot and

LEGEND ELBOWS GODS, JOINS SPACE RACE

fuelling what they call the 'wind up' to the launch in late September/early October (even that's not definite).

As of writing, Chairman John Peel has gone as far as describing *The Great Space Race* as "... a spectacular futuristic romp, with the emphasis on fun and entertainment. We saw the opportunity for a completely new kind of computer entertainment; one that goes beyond arcade and adventure games but retains the best elements of both."

TGSR (as it's called around Legend's Chingford command post) has two main phases, both with time limits. In the first, pre-race section, the player has to wheel and deal to get the best spaceships, weapons and personnel for his team. The race itself is a fast-paced, anything goes event pitting the player against time, natural obstacles and other competitors.

Movisoft 2, a development of the original Movisoft used in *Valhalla*, is the operating system for

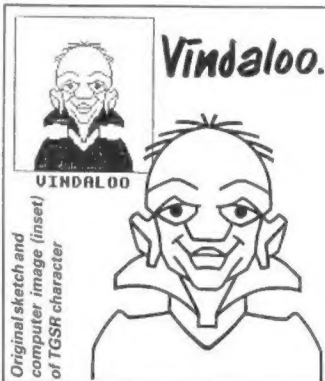
TGSR. Legend promise, "... True solid 3D graphics, which, under the control of a computerised 'camber director' create the most realistic and spectacular pictures ever." Full facial animation is claimed to be another first for *TGSR* enabling players to see the characters on-screen in detailed close-up.

Legend Managing Director Jan Peel told BIG K that *TGSR* had come about largely in the same way as *Valhalla*. "We asked dealers what they wanted to see in a new computer game," she said. "Just as they said when we started *Valhalla* they asked for something entirely new, entirely amazing, original and with spectacular graphics!" With the gauntlet hurled Legend set about coming up with the goods. According to Jan the bill for production costs alone came to a quarter of a million pounds by the time *TGSR* was complete. However, with *Valhalla* already having grossed over £2m (see BIG K No. 1) the in-

vestment seems worthwhile.

The Great Space Race will be released simultaneously for the Commodore 64 and Spectrum 48K. Price has yet to be confirmed but is expected to be around £14.95.

Meanwhile, *Valhalla* lives on and is spreading its wings on the international scene. John told us that he is negotiating with a "very, very large U.S. software company" (as opposed to 'very large' or just plain 'large') for the Stateside release of *Valhalla*.



NEWT MEN ALIVE AND KICKING

BRIGHTON-BASED software company Salamander are not going out of business.

Despite reports elsewhere in the computer press to this effect, last month company directors hit back at what they said was "an urge to write us off... we are alive and well and would appreciate the decency of a phone call before wakes are organised."



MSXTRA!

MITSUBISHI, MAKERS of the wartime Zero fighter, have entered the rapidly growing MSX market with a personal computer, the ML-F110.

Recently seen in top-secret test flights over the Pacific island of Iwo Jima — where it came under intensive American AAA fire — the lightweight F110 is apparently distinguished by its extraordinary manoeuvrability, great firepower and ability to carry a massive payload. However it appears to be relatively underpowered at 32 Horserams (compared to the 64 of other fighters in the same strategic arena).

Meanwhile more details of the Sanyo MPC 100 MSX machine (see photo) have been revealed. It differs from other makes in possessing a light pen facility.



THRILL-POWER PEAKS AT QS

QUICKSILVA have successfully concluded an historic deal with The Mighty Tharg, alien editor of Britain's top (and the Galaxy's Greatest) science fiction comic 2000 AD to produce computer games featuring his awesome characters.

The first game, *Strontium Dogs* and the *Death Gauntlet*, is due out now and stars Johnny Alpha, mutant bounty hunter of the future. *Strontium Dog* is probably 2000 AD's second all-time most popular series after the top-rated Judge Dredd. Other 2000 AD mega-stars include *Robo-Hunter*, *The A.B.C. Warriors*, *Rogue Trooper* and *Ace Trucking Company*.

Asked about future plans,

Quicksilva's Mark Eyles said that provided this first time went well others would follow.

BIG K was honoured to be granted ten seconds of the Mighty Tharg's valuable time. He would not be drawn on the details of the deal but confirmed that several crates of plastic cups (his favourite Earth food) were involved. The Mighty One also stated that Quicksilva's game would be, "... zarjaz, scrotnig, ghafflebette and that only a grexnix would miss it."

Strontium Dog and the *Death Gauntlet* will initially be available only on the Commodore 64 with the Spectrum version following soon after.



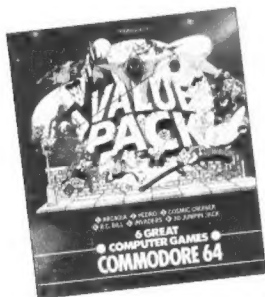
YANKS LAND ON SOFTWARE PROJECTS

From our War Correspondent

DATELINE: LIVERPOOL. A new development in the escalating Battle for Britain took place as American software forces infiltrated yet another British software house. (See *On-Line News* last month for first reports of the Invasion threat.)

Units from Sierra and Broderbund, two crack American software houses, reached a bloodless agree-

CHEAPSKATE CORNER



Mastertronic, have built their empire on lower market echelons. Their latest offerings are *Psycho Shopper* and *Alcatraz Harry*. Then there's that blatantly booze besotted lot — Beau-Jolly (geddit?) who've masterminded the computer equivalent to the party six pack. There's one for each of the CBM 64, 48K Spectrum, and Vic 20, at £14.99, plus the 16K Spectrum four-pack at £9.99.

Another newcomer to Cheapo Corner is Atlantis. They're sitting on a nest of games for all major machines and are going into a slow hatch of four per month. Then there's Scorpio Games-world. Not only have Scorpio bought out a £1.99 graphic adventure for the Spectrum, *Codebook Caper*, but they've a whole bunch of games for the Texas T199.

IT AIN'T what you prog, it's the price that you flog it — that's what gets results. Or at least that's what incresing numbers of companies are trying to find out. Great amounts of games priced at £1.99 are being bought to our attention, in what's obviously going to be the great race to fill stockings this Christmas. Svengals of cut-price,



VIVA EL

SPAIN! LAND of sunshine, warm seas, paella, bullfights ... and the Dragon computer. Come again?

It's true, 6809E fans. The all-Welsh Dragon 32/64 series, once the pride of the BritMicro industry — and more recently just the latest in a series of BritMicro disasters — has finally been rescued from oblivion by a Spanish-based company cal-

led EuroHard.

The giant GEC company, who initially stepped into the breach when Dragon looked like going down earlier this year, will continue to distribute and service the machine in the UK. However, yet another new company — called Touchmaster — has been set up to coordinate the transference of the production lines from the Land of

ment with Software Projects for the release of their games.

Sierra's armoury is known to contain some particularly big guns in the form of licensed games based on top comic strips 'B.C.' and 'The Wizard of Id' as well as the recent deal with Walt Disney to produce games featuring their characters. Alan Maton, C-in-C of Software Projects, said that they now had access to most of Sierra's inventory and would be converting it for use in British machines. First out will be *B.C.'s Quest for Tires*, available immediately for the CBM 64 on disc and cassette and soon for Spectrum.

Broderbund, while not sporting quite as many well-known products as Sierra, has *Lode Runner*, a particularly popular game in the States. SP will be making this available in the U.K. on the Spectrum and CBM 64.

Meanwhile SP are marshalling their own forces for an assault on as many machines as possible with their own big gun, *Manic Miner*.

Your correspondent doesn't expect this to be the last skirmish in the attempt to take over Britain's domestic software industry and urges vigilance at all times.

DRACO!

Mists and Eisteddfods (Spain) to the land of pesetas and shark-infested seas (Wales).

Meanwhile, mixed fortunes continue to attend the Oric/Atmos range. Amid rumours of impending liquidation of the British end of the company, Oric Computers continue to sell a storm in the Land of the Franc and the Pissoir (France). This major Euro-success story in its own right has now been added considerable weight by the news that a new market appears to be opening up with the securing of a £3/4 million deal to sell machines to Germany (the Land of Würstchen and Wunderkinder) and Switzerland (Fully Debugged Cuckoo Clocks).

BUT DOES IT SELL DRINKS?



Is it a cash-point? Can it vend you a drink? No, it's an Electronic Software Distribution System (EDOS). Edos Cudos will belong to John Menzies early next year.

The machine will quickly reproduce any of its store of 1,000 programs onto tape, disk or cartridge, eliminating the need for shops to hold massive software stocks. You simply choose by scrolling

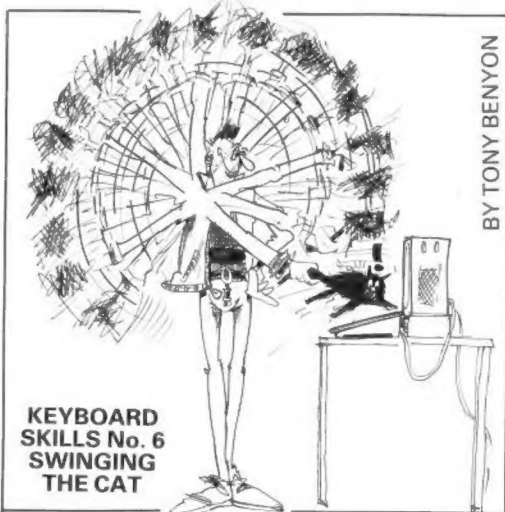
through its inventory, and all the retailer has to do is slip out the data slug and slap it into its relevant packaging.

Progs come telephone linked from the central main frame in Edinburgh. Of course, there could be some of those exciting new bugs that have a habit of slipping into any new system, but theoretically, this sounds like the end to the big wait for new software.

COULD THIS BE THE END OF PIRACY AS WE KNOW IT?

IN THE endless fight of civilisation against the parasitic preyings of piratical predators (that's you, Kevin), the industry have given you dongles, G.O.S.H., Software Projects' colour cards... and now holograms.

Not (we hasten to add) the laser jobs that cost about 20K apiece, but 3-D effect stick-ons on the lines of those funny matchbooks you get from Japan Air Lines. The suppliers, Elite Systems, claim that these small eye-bending silver logos are obtainable from only one source in the world, and therefore that counterfeit Elite games cannot carry them.



THE EDGE

IN FROM THE EDGE

HIGH QUALITY software is beaming in from The Edge, newly formed offshoot of Softek International, purveyors of fine games to the gentry for some time.

The Edge is a group of freelance programmers spread throughout the computer-literate world who, along with graphic artists and musicians are devoted to pushing back the frontiers of computer gaming on the established home micros.

How about a 1,000-plus screens of arcade action? The Edge delivers that on *Quo Vadis* and *Psytraxx*, its first two releases for the CBM 64 and Spectrum.

The Edge term these offerings 'megagames'. Take a look at the 'gee whiz' data on *Quo Vadis*: 118 caverns, 115 passages (the longest 14 screens in length).

Starbike is a space arcade adventure (that just about covers everything!) involving skill and strategy for the 48K Spectrum. A prize awaits those gamers who locate a hidden code number.

Fourth and last of the first batch of releases is *Firequest*, subtitled *The Further Adventures of Ugh!* it features the cavemen from Softek's popular release *Ugh!*.

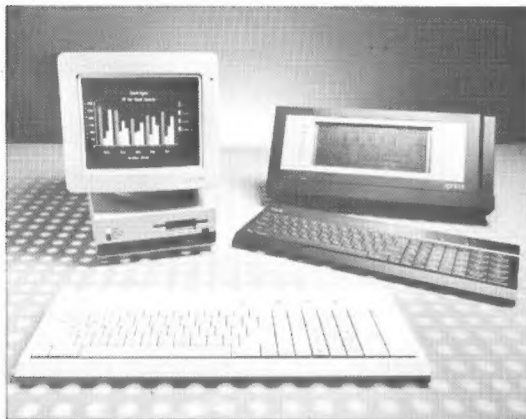
All four games will be appearing under the banner of The Edge and will retail at £9.95 for CBM 64 editions (*Starbike* costs £5.95).

BARNEY O'BEEB AND THE LITTLE PEOPLE

ACORN COMPUTERS are to set up manufacturing in the Republic of Ireland.

In the first planned year's operation 5,000 BBC Model 'B's will roll off the Dublin production line, which was due to be set up by the end of this month.

DROOLWARE CORNER



YES, YES, we know you can't afford it — but who knows? That game you're working on right now might (just might) connect in a big way... and then you'll naturally want to go 16-bit and clean up the rest of your act.

Geddit? Oh, well. News is that ACT, makers of the lovely and much-praised Apricot 16-bit biz machine, have re-vibed the spec. down to what looks like an even nicer

"peanut" version for slightly under £1,000. This is the Apricot F1, recently previewed with its larger cousin the LCD-based Apricot Portable. It appears to contain as much as the original 'cot (apart from the Microscreen), and in addition features a PCjr-style infra-red (connectionless) keyboard, all white and sleekly styled. 256K RAM comes on board as a minimum memory.

NO STRINGS ON CRL

Puppet fever seems to have broken out at CRL. Following acquisition of rights to *The Magic Roundabout* and *Terrahawks* games the company has now announced its agreement with Gerry Ander-

son to produce a game produced on his classic *Thunderbirds* TV series, first seen in the sixties and soon to return to TV in a brand new series (yay!).

Terrahawks — Anderson's most recent TV work — has been written for the 48K Spectrum by acclaimed software author (and BIG K columnist) Richard Taylor and is said to feature "almost perfect 3D simulation". No details are available on *Thunderbirds* as of going to press.

ATARI SLASH PRICES AS NEW REGIME BITES

ATARI HAVE cut virtually all their hardware and software prices as the first steps in the fightback to success following the takeover two months ago by ex-CBM chief Jack Tramiel.

Most startling cut is for the 600XL computer (basically 16K but expandable to 64K via a RAMpack), which is now under £100. The 1050 disc drive and the 1020 Colour Printer are each cut by £100.00. The VCSjr comes down to £69.99 with its carts retailing at £10-13.

And AtariSoft titles will also be cut — down to the £8-10 range. Interestingly, amid conflicting rumours from the U.S. about Tramiel's overall strategy in buying the Atari empire, reports are now emerging claiming that in the near future AtariSoft will dump the CBM format entirely.

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You are commanding a squadron of four ground attack aircraft...

The mission is seemingly hopeless.

Fly along the river at zero altitude, twisting and turning crazily to stay within its tortuous banks, blasting at anything and everything in sight. Especially the bridges.

Three of your jets are held in reserve while you are pitched against Battleships, Enemy Aircraft, Land Tanks, Balloons, Helicopter Gunships. All intent only on your destruction.

And destroy you they will, if you don't get them first. You'll need to keep an eye on your fuel gauge. But take comfort, you can take fuel on board from one of the special depots.

If you get hit - and nobody has yet reached the end of the river - your next reserve starts at the last bridge you blasted on your way through!

Each target you destroy adds to your points score.

Like all Activision Software, River Raid will hold you and keep you coming back for more.

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LET SS = "sp[ee]k [nn][oo] [ee]vil" will say "speak no evil"! Further commands control the "voicing" of keys as they are pressed, and an intonation facility allows you to add expression to the speech.

μ SPEECH is fully compatible with ZX Interface 1 and may be used with the **CURRAH μ SLOT** Expandable Motherboard, allowing easy expansion of your ZX system. **μ SPEECH** and **μ SLOT** will also be compatible with the **CURRAH μ SOURCE** unit when it arrives later this year, allowing you to write **Assembler** and **FORTH** statements directly into your **BASIC** programs!

Top selling games like **ULTIMATE'S Lunar Jetman** feature **μ SPEECH** voice output — watch out for other titles from Bug-Byte, CDS, Ocean, Quicksilver and PSS.

μ SPEECH is available from COMET, W.H. SMITH, WOOLWORTHS, GREENS, BOOTS, JOHN MENZIES, SPECTRUM STORES and good dealers nationwide — or use the form to order the **CURRAH μ SPEECH** — winner of the CTA 'Product of the Year' award 1984.

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MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU?

THE AUTHORITATIVE voice of Holmes, supersleuth, has been given a new lease of life. **HOLMES** — Home Office Large Major Enquiry System — will be a computer system to coordinate and collate all the data that pours into police incident rooms across the land. They added 'Large' to lend it less of a 'household' name — (what won't these people do?)

The Home Office are vetting likely candidates for contracts (they wouldn't name names), hoping to get **HOLMES** on his feet by January 1985. The force are likely to house an agglomeration of existing compatible mainframes and micros, for which special software will be writ-

ten.

HOLMES will link up clues, and match similar cases up and down the country. His cross referencing abilities will improve upon the existing thousands of card files (understatement of the year, surely). For example, if a detective makes a search for suspect 'Anthony', Holmes will also give him a 'Tony' and 'Tone'. But if our editor was to run off with all next year's competition prizes, would it also search for him under his better known handles of 'The Big Cheese' and 'Loud Mouth'? We will find out. Let's hope he never has to.

Our natural paranoia led us to enquire as to the extent to which **HOLMES** would be allowed to go on line in his quest to control crime. Will he talk to immigration control, over-ride company accounts or share a hotline with Margaret Hacker? The Home Office were not amused.

"We will be confined to the incident room alone," they said. As we said. We'll find out. Let's hope we never have to. **NICKY XIKLUNA**

NO, NOGGIN THE NOG DOESN'T LIVE HERE

TIR NA NOG, as every reader of 2000 AD's sword and sorcery series *Slaine* knows, is the ancient Gaelic name for the Land of Youth (or Land of the Young, depending on your historical preference)

Tir Na Nog is also the name of a new graphic adventure from Gargoyle Games for the 48K Spectrum due for release next month. It features the exploits of the great hero, Cuchulainn, following his departure from the world of the Living, his entry into *Tir Na Nog* and his subsequent attempts to locate and reunite the fragments of the Seal of Calum.

Gargoyle claim "... State-of-the-art film animation" in the game's graphics. The main character stands 56 pixels tall and a total of 64 frames are required for the complete animation of the figure. He is situated in a complex landscape which can be viewed from four different 'camera angles', like *Quick-silver's Ant Attack*

The game cassette will

come in a presentation box with a cover depicting the Celtic God Cernunnos (you must remember him), a map, instruction book and extracts from the History and Peoples of *Tir Na Nog*. Everything you need for a jaunt through myth and legend.

RICHARD BURTON



FALL GUY GOES SOFT

The Fall Guy is the latest TV series to get the made-for-computers treatment. Newly-named **Elite Systems Ltd.** (formerly **Richard Wilcox Software**)

have a new game on the stocks based on the popular (it says here) TV series showing on ITV.

For those who may have missed the series

(for shame) it stars **Lee Majors** as **Colt Seavers**, a top Hollywood stuntman who moonlights as a modern-day bounty hunter, bringing back to justice people who have jumped bail. He is aided

in his work by typical, boneheaded young sidekick **Howie Munson** (Doug Barr) and don't-call-me-dumb blonde **Jody Banks** (Heather Thomas).

Elite's game will be an arcade adventure featuring the player as **Colt Seavers** in pursuit of a couple of **Bail Bond Jumpers**. Needless to say, a number of Hollywood-type stunts will have to be performed by **Colt** before he gets his men in this fast action multi-screen game.

The Fall Guy will be launched jointly for the **Commodore 64** and **Spectrum** computers towards the end of October. Pricing will be **£6.95** for the **Spectrum** and **£7.95** for the **CBM 64** (£9.95 for disc edition).

BIG K will have an exclusive review of *The Fall Guy* next month.





HOW DO YOU SAY 'POKE' IN RUSSIAN?

EXCELLENCY Work continues at Bogdanov Oligarchical Soviet-Lennist Hi-tech Institute (BOLSHI) Da! Professor Chomski has announced this week his stunning new 13K machine! Have no need of bourgeois individualist miniaturisation habit. But working night and day to make model to leave by door. Is making transportation difficult.

Is also big problem, Excellency, as revised (1985) five year plan demands that eight million babushkas own micro. Is good idea to exploit—I mean try out the Western Capitalist technology? Just until the mighty production lines start to roll!

Your humble sputnik.
(deleted)

IF YOU thought our Russian letters were a good joke—you're wrong. (They're a bad joke.) Also they're not far from describing what the real situation *vis-à-vis* East/West computer *detente*.

Computer sales to the East have been completely prohibited for years. Forget the exigencies of the computer revolution—legislation has not changed since 1976! Now

... Because trade barriers are coming down, and before long Warsaw Pact punters will be cursing the membrane keyboards of their ZX81's (just like the rest of us). NICKY XIKLUNA reports.

for the first time the embargo is cracking.

The USSR does make its own non-military computers—reportedly (hopefully?) inferior to Western counterparts. There are very few publicly available. In schools, only whizz-niks get a look-in, at special schools for maths virtuosos. So the USSR is itching to improve its stock of western computers—good news for the prolific industry here, eh? But things ain't that simple.

Sitting on trade restrictions is COCOM—the coordinating committee controlling high tech trade with the East. The nations therein have been in complete deadlock for the last two years—the main reason being... America (cue "Hail to the Chief").

"Exporting computer technology could constitute a major threat to US National Security", said William Archey, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Trade and export control, recently. "Sophisticated weapons today depend on dual use technology—civilian and military." For starters, it's said that the Apple II alone is fully capable of missile guidance (if not when running Applesoft!).

The Assistant Secretary for US defence has cited the fully computerised 9th American army Division as the sort of thing the Russians want to emulate. "Humph!" said a USSR press rep. "They would say that, wouldn't they? Americans always overreact."

Meanwhile, Western com-

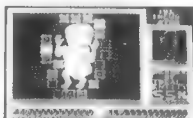
panies are steeling themselves for fierce competition over export to the Soviet bloc. Rumour has it that four hundred ZX81s are already lined up ready for shipment to Czechoslovakia. (That should worry the Pentagon.) It has also been alleged that Acorn has spent thousands on several Beeb-promoting visits to the East (see also BIG K issue #1).

"Not true," says David Springle, Acorn *grand from-age*. "It'll be at least two years before trade starts. You journalists have been hassling me all week. I've just come back from holiday in Russia—that's all!"

Not a lot of agreement, generally. One thing's for sure—computers sold to the USSR'll have no capability to talk to each other *à la* Micronet or Prestel. So don't expect to tap Rusknet, Sovinet or Rednet. Meanwhile, Big K is waiting for some interesting Socialist/Realist software to break borders—or perhaps the arrival of the odd dissident (corrupted no doubt by a sneak preview of *Jet Set Willy*). Until then, *nastrovia*.

AUTOMATA U.K.

The Piman's Software House



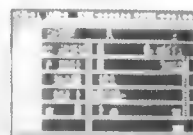
DEUSEX MACHINA

DEUS EX MACHINA 48K Spec. Kempston Joystick & ZX Interface 2 compatible. The unique new era of entertainment, starring Ian Dury, Jon Pertwee, Frankie Howard and you, in an animated televised fantasy, synchronised to an incredible stereo soundtrack. There is nothing like it in this world.



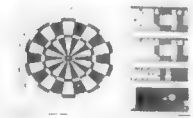
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PIMANIA 48K Spec. The Cult Adventure that's for real! Could you be the lucky winner of 'The Golden Sundial of Pi'? Many have tried and failed. Voted program of 1983 by the Computer Trade Association (Joint winner)



PIROMANIA

PIROMANIA 48K Spec. M/C Arcade Style, Kempston Joystick & ZX Interface 2 compatible. Strike a light! Fire your imagination. That bright spark of a Piman is flaming well out to make the residents of Automata Towers the toast of the town! Can you help Walter Hose dampen the Piman's extinguished career and help the inmates give up smoking?



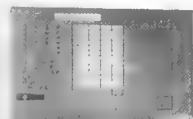
DARTZ

DARTZ 48K Spec. Family fun, This 'arrowing version of your local's favourite game! Includes true life scoring with 'The more you play the more you drink, the worse your game becomes' rule!



PI EYED

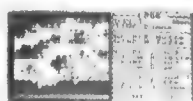
PI-EYED 48K Spec. M/C Arcade Style Kempston Joystick compatible. The Piman's hit the bottle! Can you help him negotiate the traffic and drink the town dry?



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YAKZEE 48K Spec and Dragon. Family fun. An oriental game of luck and skill for 1 to 4 players, playing between 1 to 4 rounds. Each tape comes with both the Dragon and the 48K Spectrum versions along with a simple to follow guide on how to play YAKZEE.

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CRUSOE

PI-IN'ERE 48K Spec. M/C Arcade Style. Kempston Joystick & ZX Interface 2 compatible. 61 screens of action as Burt searches for the elusive bug inside a computer, while keeping out of the reaches of the minor menaces. The program includes Hi-Score, Save and Load facility as well as Replay from last position feature.



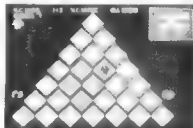
PI-IN'ERE

OLYMPIMANIA 48K Spec. M/C Arcade Style. Currah Micro Speech & Kempston Joystick compatible. For all those who just can't get enough of the Olympics, the Piman stages his own just for you! Yes he's going for gold in the craziest events you've ever seen! Can you set new world records in the Speechchase, Alpi Ski-ing, Pitathlon, Ji-Jump, or even the Butterpi? The Piland International Anthem on the flip side



OLYMPIMANIA

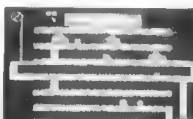
PI-BALLED 48K Spec. M/C Arcade Style Currah Microspeech & Kempston Joystick compatible. Bouncy, bouncy, this fast action game will let you have a ball! Starring The Balls Brothers, Sid the Snake, Jas'n Col, and your friend and ours The Piman



PI-BALLED

MORRIS MEETS THE BIKERS

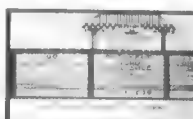
16/48K Spec. M/C Arcade Style. Kempston Joystick compatible. Morris finds himself abandoned in a multi-storey car park. Help him gather the 10 coins per screen to pay his way out, while avoiding the kamikaze bikers.



MORRIS/BIKERS

GO TO JAIL 48K Spec

Family fun. A computer property trading game for up to 5 players. Your computer not only acts as a banker, but can also take on the roll of a ruthless player, buying, selling and trading its own property.



GO TO JAIL

NEW WHEELS JOHN? 48K Spec. Family fun. Would you buy a used motor from this man? Dare you clock an old banger? Have you ever wondered what it's like to run your own second-hand car lot? Wheel leave the rust to you!

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POD HOPPER

CUTHBERT IN SPACE/
DRAGON

Cuthbert's back, or rather gone. Three different screens show gravity defying platform forms which support fuel pods on some far off planet. Microdeal's harassed hero must leave the mother ship which is at the bottom of the screen, collect a pod and return. Objects which hurtle across the screen are out to stop him but Cuthbert's flit-ter, used for his excursions, can spit destruction at them.

Control is via joystick or arrow keys plus spacebar and response is excellent. . . and it needs to be. Getting those pods whilst dodging and firing continuously is a hectic task. Success in retrieving all 15 pods is rewarded by a shower of objects from the top of the screen which you can collect while still contending with the horizontal horrors. Your destruction or

a swift retreat to safety means you are presented with another screen of fuel pods to collect. Sometimes your game is interrupted by a tedious event whereby you use the controls to manipulate figures. . . sorry, co-ordinates, to simulate collecting spare parts to mend your damaged ship.

There is a game pause feature and a high score table. Unfortunately, all the high score positions are preset at 5000. This is difficult to achieve and so the table often remains unused. Silly Microdeal. In fact, this game is difficult, frustrating. . . and great fun. Animation is smooth and the hum as the bay doors open to reveal Cuthbert's flitter is just right.

— T.S.
Maker: MICRODEAL
Format: cassette
Price: £8.00
Graphics: KK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: KKK
Overall: KK

HOT ROCK

RUBY RUNABOUT/
SPECTRUM 48K

Reggie the Robber is a nasty piece of work. He'd sell his pet hamster to Pedigree Chum if he thought he'd make a bob or two. So imagine his delight when he hears of the fabulous Rock Salmon Ruby, a hefty hunk of stone worth more than the monthly pay packets of both T. Tyler and R. Burton combined! (Cheap R. Burton combined, huh? — Ed & Asst Ed)

Thus the scene for your adventure is set. You must aid Reg the tea-leaf in his attempt to purloin the gem and abscond to foreign parts. However, it's unlikely that this task will take very long. The game features only 40 locations, 20 of which are neatly (and quickly) illustrated. Hardly a challenge by current standards. There's little freedom of input for the player. Experienced explorers are unlikely to find the game of much interest.

Still, response times are good and the demeanour of the piece is bright, and colourful. I guess if you wanna buy a prog for your kid sister this could be one to go for. — S.K.

Maker: SCORPIO
SOFTWARE
Format: cassette
Price: £1.99
Graphics: KK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: K
Overall: KK

DEADSHEET

NEW VENTURE/
SPECTRUM 48K

A po-faced simulation for prospective accountants. The object of the game (I use the term with all due respect, gents) is to run a business (you're given the option of buying either a small village shoppe or a big town megastore), scam the taxman and acquire whatever luxuries (bonus points!) you can afford. The menu offers an opportunity to place ads in the media, visit your bank (presumably to pay for the ads) and plan effective stock management. Yawnsville dad. You continue all this until you've earned enough filthy lucre to afford the fabled Falconmobile. At that point you're so disgustingly rich the program can bear no more and dies. It's a sombre lark indeed.

The relay card declares. Because of the complex nature of this program we are putting a PG rating on it. Suitable for only intelligent people above the age of 14 years old. Well, PTOOI! We FOOEY! to them, eh kids! We don't wanna play their stupid game anyway. — S.K.

Maker: FALCON
COMPUTING
Format: cassette
Price: £3.95
Graphics: K
Playability: None
Addictiveness: None
Overall: K

SWOOP/CBM 64

THE CURSE OF THE INTERSTELLAR CAGE-BIRDS

Well now, what have we here? Space Invaders with parrots. Faced with a massive flock of parrots there are only three possible courses of action. Cover your head — if the stuff gets in your hair you'll never get it out, if you get my drift. Run like hell and be branded a coward for life, or reduce them to component parts and make a fortune in the Kentucky fried/feather duster business. Me, I plump for that last option.

Apart from a few minor details this is a tarted up Space Invaders, the only difference being the parrots and their disconcerting habit of swooping — hence Swoop. . . from their holding pattern in the skies above and depositing a rather deadly egg next to you. Hit it and your ship disappears in a most impressive explosion. A sort of breaks up in bits and spins away and off the screen. It's quite nice even though the sound is a bit lacking, but all the same it's still Space Invaders. Something a bit

more original would have been better. — K.A.
Maker: MICRO POWER
Format: cassette
Price: £6.95
Graphics: KK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: K
Overall: K



REVIEWERS:
Steve Keaton
Richard Burton
Trevor Spall
Kim Aldis
Tony Tyler
Nicky Xiakluna
John Conquest

IDEAL HOLMES

The world's most famous detective made his first appearance 100 years ago in a magazine story called 'A Scandal in Bohemia'. Today, he lives on in the form of a computer adventure from those Wizards of Oz, Melbourne House.

EVENING was falling over Baker Street and Sherlock Holmes and I, as was our habitual wont at this time of day, were smoking our pipes and reading the evening newspaper.

"Great news, Watson!" said my friend, tapping his pipe out on my knee, while simultaneously measuring out a "fix" of cocaine.

"The game's afoot, Holmes?" I replied hopelessly — for life in our Baker Street lodgings had, of late, been dull indeed.

"The game, old friend," replied he, "is more than a foot. It's ahead."

I laughed — somewhat dutifully, I confess, since I had not the faintest idea what he was talking about and feared that the evil drug already coursing through his veins was rendering him incoherent.

"Ahead of what?" I ventured, eyeing the revolver on the nearby table and wondering if I could possibly get to it before he did.

"Of the competition, dear boy!" replied my friend. "See, it is here, in the newspaper. Melbourne has struck again!"

I replied that I did not know the gentleman, adding that I presumed it was yet another alias adopted by our old adversary, Professor Moriarty.

Holmes eyed me with a measure of impatience. "Sometimes, Watson, I wonder about you..." he sighed, then his gaze resumed its original piercing quality. "Melbourne," he said, "is not Moriarty. It is a company with, I believe, Australian connexions."

"Their line of trade is the manufacture of analytical games of a questing nature, to operate in conjunction with the Babbage Analytical Engine. I realise that this is possibly new to you, but then, you, with all your sterling qualities, do not follow scientific developments as closely as I. In brief, then: the company has already scored a remarkable commercial success with a game titled, I believe, *The Habit*. Naturally there has been pressure upon the directors to produce what is termed a 'follow-

From: MELBOURNE HOUSE
Format: cassette. Price: £14.95.

up'; and here, in the *Daily Chronicle*, is a report on the new product. Allow me," he continued, overriding my protests, "to read it to you. If there are any unfamiliar terms I shall explain them in due course."

He picked up the *Chronicle*, which crackled in his steely grip. I was pleased to note that the drug-induced brightness in his eyes had given way to the old eager glitter.

"Melbourne's new potential blockbuster displays many of the ticks and trademarks which made its predecessor so famous: real-time action, a tough and intricate plotline, sturdy if transitory graphics, and a truly enormous vocabulary made relatively easy to handle by the use of *English* — that's *English* with an 'E', Watson."

Alimentary

"With an eye?" I responded feebly, for I had already found he had been correct: I barely understood a word of the report.

"Aye," he replied, and continued reading aloud.

"The story starts with the two main protagonists in the famous Baker Street sitting room. They are reading the *Daily Chronicle*. News in the paper of a murder in Leatherhead sets the famed pair off on the scent, by hansom to Victoria Station. In taking up the quest for the murderer(s), they are once again up against Inspector Lestrade of Scotland Yard."

"The same Lestrade?" I asked, astonished.

"The same," he replied, and continued to read. "Getting Watson to read the paper is difficult, as the old boy seems almost paralytic with stupidity" — I beg you, Watson, allow me to continue — "but perseverance brings its own reward, and soon you find yourself in the street."

"The boulder who wrote this calumny will

find himself in the street fast enough once I get through with him!" I roared, for I was incandescent with rage.

Holmes smiled thinly and continued to read. "Use of the *Animtalk* technique allows the player to give instructions to other characters in the game, a method first pioneered in its predecessor. However, asking Watson to, for example, pay the cabbie produces the usual dimwitted non-response and in the end you have to pay the man yourself."

"By God —" I raved, stamping in fury at this unmitigated libel.

"At least the old codger doesn't hang around singing of gold — a small mercy but welcome enough."

At this point I snatched the paper from my hawk-featured friend and read it myself.

"As Holmes, you will find yourself extraordinarily lazy. You never walk anywhere, it seems, but stick to trains and cabs — in keeping with the great detective's naturally indolent character," Holmes frowned, but already I was feeling slightly mollified.

"Moreover, real time passes, kept track of — poor English, there, Holmes, I fancy — 'by a digital clock on the screen. Incidentally, Typing the word NO produces what is colloquially known as a 'crash'..."

There was a long pause. Downstairs, there was a thunder of crockery as Mrs Hudson, dead drunk as usual, fell over while bringing up our suppers.

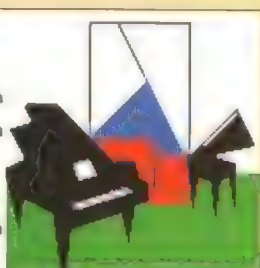
"Was that what the writer means by a crash?" I asked timidly, for Holmes was apparently in a trance.

"Eh? What? No!" replied my friend.

"Then what does he mean? And what is the other word digital?" But there was no reply from the Best and Wisest Man I Have Ever Known.

So after some minutes of silence I refilled my pipe from the Persian Slipper and sat down at the desk to compose a letter to my solicitor, — Conan Doyle.

You find your self in a large lavishly decorated bedroom. In one corner stands an upright piano with a selection of sheet music on top. On a table by the window, which looks down on a well kept garden is a new and expensive looking gramophone.



"Holmes eyed me with a measure of impatience."



LOVE THAT BIN

TRASHMAN/SPECTRUM 48K*

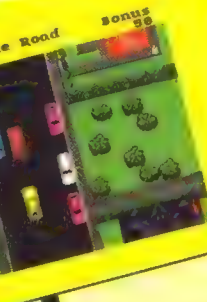
Now humping a dustbin up and down the road may well be fun but it's not really what we've come to expect from New Gen is it? I mean, just where are the dinosaurs? I've scoured the streets and ransacked the garages but have yet to find a single one. Highly disappointing. A Malcom Evans game without dinosaurs is simply not on.

Visually Trashman the resplendant offering yet from the Evans pen. The scrolling townscape in which the dinosaur hides is breathtaking, with quite astounding attention paid to detail. Herbaceous borders are painted a delicate mottled green and a variety of vehicles litter the road. It's real state of the art landscaping.

Your task as the Trashman is to empty all the bins from a specified area before your bonus points reach zero. This is surprisingly hard as tramping across gardens is frowned upon by the points department and dogs weaned on nether regions lurk in the shadows. Seasoned Trashmen can earn bonus points by humouring cretinous residents in the local ing sustenance in the local hostility, although this is not to be overdone. It's all highly original stuff. If only I could find that dinosaur... — S.K.

(*CBM 64 version available through Quicksilver.)

Maker: NEW GENERATION SOFTWARE
Format: cassette
Price: £6.95 (CBM 64 — £7.95)
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: KKK
Overall: KKK



BLADERS OF THE LOST TRENCH

BLADE ALLEY/ SPECTRUM 48K

Another day, another trench. Settling into Interceptor's cockpit you glance confidently around. The Kempston looks somewhat incongruous sellotaped to the flight deck but you clasp it anyway. Suddenly a roar of anger fills the launch bay and your Ion Drives begin to bleed. Ahead in the valley wait the Ties and the Saucers...

So begins a commendable but flawed attempt to rewrite Buck Rogers and the Planet of Zoom. Flawed? 'Fraid so. There's a couple of niggling game details which persistently spoil the action. For instance, while you and the enemy scud smoothly across the scrolling blasting away at each other the scrolling backdrop looks decidedly hesitant. It doesn't seem to know where it's going. The Photon Disruptors are also suspect — a successful shot seems to depend more on the relative size of the two conflicting ships rather than any real space-jock accuracy. Try as you might, nothing is ever picked off on the horizon. Killer Kane, Buck Rogers' nemesis, best summed it all up with that celebrated line: "There's nowt in them pants save radishes!" The media clearly owe him a great debt. S.K.

Maker: PSS
Format: cassette
Price: £6.95
Graphics: KK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: KK
Overall: KK

SILLY WALK

THE QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL/ SPECTRUM 48K

Hugely unfunny text 'n' graphics adventure that wants desperately to be zany. "It's 932 AD (After Dinner)," proclaims the manual, "and Arthur, King of the Britons is looking for his Knights. No, there hasn't been a burglary of the Royal Chess Set..." Splutter. It's your misfortune to play one of these missing knights, the not-so-amusingly named Sir Tappin the Basic. Your task is to track down the Holy Grail, a quest

inherited no doubt from Sir Python of Olde. Author Chris Newcombe is clearly a fan as there's a gamut of swipes offered, from carnivorous white rabbits to the Knights Who Say Nic (and other similar oaths). While the quest is quite playable you'll need a strong stomach to suffer such witty retorts as "Take what? Berk!!!" and "A French guard unclogs his nose in your direction. You die a horrible green death!" Laugh? I didn't start. — S.K.

Maker: DREAM SOFTWARE
Format: cassette
Price: £6.95
Graphics: K
Playability: K
Addictiveness: KK
Overall: K

A JOLIE GODE GAYME

ROBYN HODE/ SPECTRUM 48K

Runesoft stalwarts Slack and Stevenson have made great efforts to keep Robyn Hode as authentic as possible. All the locations (in this mammoth text adventure) actually existed back in the 13th century, Nottingham Castle has been culled from such literary sources as Nottingham City Library, Nottingham Castle, the Robin Hood Society and The Domesday Book. The upshot of all this research appears to be an abundance of extremely odd spellings. These add considerable to the mediaeval atmosphere and so compensate for the lack of an evocative narrative.

I've been giving it a good old thrashing the past couple of weeks but as yet the Sherrylfe of Nottingham has little to fear from this particular Hooded Man. I'm still looking for a way out of the forest! Still things will arrive less improve. One day a crib-sheet will arrive in the post and thus inspired I'll stagger into the city of Nottingham, find the secret caves which lead to the castle and (gasp) go on to rescue Maid Marion. Mead and venison will then duly flow. — S.K.

Maker: RUNESOFT
Format: cassette
Price: £9.95
Graphics: NA
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: KKK
Overall: KKK





STAR BORES DON'T SCORE

STAR TRADER/ SPECTRUM 48K

SF trading simulation that promises a great deal and then promptly falls flat on its face. As is the norm in these things you must ply stated trade routes with well chosen cargo. Selling at a profit when possible, and minimizing losses when not. The cargo is bought at the local Spaceport (nice graphic) from a band of traders whom we'll presume are related. While stocking up you're given an option on a laser pistol. This is used for defense from a pirate attack en route. Naturally you buy it. Things then go downhill. The screen display changes as you enter deep space and more often than not the Pirates attack. With a new laser on board you jump at the battle-option only to find the gun is next to useless. The response time is appalling! Naturally the Pirates clean you out.

The next bummer comes when you land on the new planet. It's exactly the same as the one you've just left! You're back at a spaceport (same graphic) bartering with the local traders who once again look related. Hardly worth the journey. At least with the old Trader trilogy from Pixel you got to meet a few amor-phous blobs and alien dudes. Not so here. Invariably I sold my cargo off at a loss and then pegged out through boredom. Well, it was the most exciting option on offer. — S.K.

Maker: BUG-BYTE
Format: cassette
Price: \$6.95
Graphics: K
Playability: K
Addictiveness: None
Overall: K



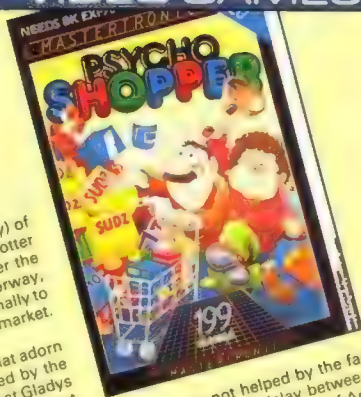
PENSIONER NICKED IN SHOPLIFTING PURGE

PSYCHO SHOPPER/ VIC 20

This is the sad tale (well, it is when I play) of old Arthur, and his many attempts to potter to the shops. Guide the old codger over the double zebra, across the six lane motorway, over the high speed train tracks, and finally to screen four and Nirvana — the supermarket. What else.

As you make grabs for the coins that adorn the pavements (probably overlooked by the last batch of muggers) remember that Gladys — gran fatale — lurks amid-screens, and finally to get our man — and you wouldn't want a squashed Arthur on your conscience (or your carpet), would you?

I have a hunch that if the grey panthers ever got their dentures into this little number, Mastertronic would never see retirement. Shake not those silver locks at me — I didn't write it! But I did have fun playing it. The graphics are rather smart, especially for the short memory of the VIC, and at the low budget price. *Psycho Shopper* has plenty of Pzazz, but never let an off-the-wall idea fool you — it's difficult to accomplish. You really have to hare it to avoid that traffic.



This was not helped by the fact that there was an annoying delay between movement of joystick and movement of Arthur. If this is a result of age — there sure ain't no flies on Gladys! I don't know what old people are coming to these days. — N.X.

Maker: MASTERTRONIC
Format: cassette
Price: \$1.99
Graphics: KK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: K
Overall: KK

PARDON ME WHILE I BUCKLE MY SWASH

RAPIER PUNCH/ VIC 20

It's back to the romantic era of swordfighting. Those wonderous days when men came ready canned, (but with no labels), and when we ladies threw our hankies at people we liked. (Yuck!) Days when you got romantically sliced, rather than shot to death.

But let us not harp on the magic of it all — the game must go on! You are entering a darkened room with your trusty steel and dagger. The darkness recedes from your torch, as you foray on for the treasure chest — drag-beam will also reveal myriad baddies — dragons and spinning crosses. You may only prang them with your rapier whilst an intermittent tone is playing, otherwise press fire to throw your dagger, or you'll be laughing on the other side of your vizor.

This could be a really good game, but it is isn't enough meat on the bare bones of the concept to keep me gawing instead of ignoring. If it was a first draft, I'd say it had potential. But it isn't and it doesn't. — N.X.

Maker: COMMODORE
Format: cassette
Price: \$4.99
Graphics: Ughh!
Playability: K
Addictiveness: K
Overall: K



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48K Spectrum



16K/48K Spectrum



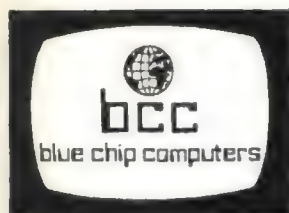
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other machine code software.
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to great effect. Worth checking
out even if it is priced a quid or
over the odds. —S.K.

Maker: ISP MARKETING
Format: cassette
Price: \$17.95
Graphics: Make 'em yourself
Playability: Not really
Addictiveness: Pah! This is
hard work
Overall: KKK



YOU CANNOT BE SERIOUS

YOU CAN'T
WIMBLEDON 64/CBM 64
...edon, is way behind
So it's

YOU CANNOT BE SERIOUS

WIMBLEDON 64/CBM 64

Wimbledon is way behind us now but tennis is always a popular spectator sport. So it's hardly surprising that a version for the Commodore has surfaced. It ain't gonna turn ya into no McEnroe — for a start there's no linesman to scream at — but even so it gives you a chance to whack at the ball in a passable impersonation of the real thing. And it loads as fast as hell.

The view is full 3D, from one end of the court and — this is the only bad point in a good game — requires two players. It seems fairly pointless having a game like this if you can't brush up your play against the computer.

For a while, when you get used to the thing, it's quite subtle — hand, smashes and lobs are all possible and control the matter of how long you hold down the button. A passable imitation of a serve. The ball is in flight

The view is full 3D, from one end of the court to the other, and it's a fairly pointless having a game like this if you can't brush your teeth with it. The controls are quite subtle, and the graphics are all possible and complete. You can play against the computer, or you can play against a real person. And the game is a lot of fun. The ball is in flight but it's not too hard to control. A passable imitation of a spin serve, and a matter of how long you hold down the button. The ball is in flight but it's not too hard to control. A passable imitation of a spin serve, and a matter of how long you hold down the button. The ball is in flight but it's not too hard to control. A passable imitation of a spin serve, and a matter of how long you hold down the button.

Maker: MERLIN
SOFTWARE
Format: cassette/disc
Price: £7.95 £9.95 disc

Graphics: KKK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: KK
Overall: KK

Be A McVid Kid

Be A McVid Kid

McVID/BBC

There are as many sprite draw routines and utilities for the BBC around now as there are leaves on trees. They even come free with magazines so it's nice to see that someone has gone to some trouble to provide a really worthwhile piece of software that does more than just let you shift aliens around the screen. McVid does, and is, a great deal more than that. Firstly it covers not only sprites but machine code line drawing—which isn't that hard but seems to be notably devoid of attention in books and magazines—and screen scrolling. Secondly it lets you do it in ANY graphics mode, even Mode 0, which is something none of the others even consider. Finally the reason why it rises head and shoulders above the rest is it's accessibility. These are not utilities for your own needs—trim them down, expand your programmes, add your own routines. These are for the person who has no idea why more

ANY graphics programmer should be able to shoulder the rest of it's accessories. A source listing can adapt them to your own needs — trim them on and whack them into your programmes. If you can produce fast, smooth graphics in one of the high-res screens you're going to impress people. The reason is not, as a lot of people who should know better try to tell you, because there are more colours but because it's easier. In Mode 2 each byte holds information on only two pixels. Reasonably smooth animation can be achieved by whopping your shape two pixels at a time into the next byte. Hi-res modes are another matter altogether. Each byte holds either four or eight pixels depending on the resolution so you have to get into rolling bytes in and out of each other. Even if your assembler isn't too hot (although you'll need a bit) you can use these routines without really understanding them.

Line drawing is nice. A little slower than some I've seen, but it's a fairly fast rotate and scale routines. The table for COS and SIN values is an improvement on the line draw is an improvement on the beginning of

The line drawing is nice. A little slower than some I've seen, but they do include fairly fast rotate and scale routines. The rotation uses a look-up table for COS and SIN values so it's probably as fast as you'll get and the line draw is an incremental method so it only needs one division at the beginning of the draw. It is a very nice little package, especially if you want to use machine code graphics techniques. Even if you don't, it's just to speed things up a little.

McVid is a very nice little package, especially if you want to know more about machine code graphics techniques. Even if you don't it's useful to have around just to speed things up a little. —

No Thanks, Mrs Yanouk

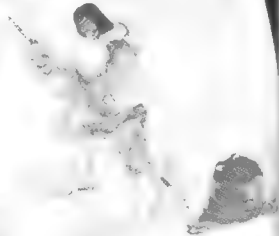
Mrs T
ICE HUNTER/CBM 64
The good thing about being an Eskimo, it would seem, is that, um, there isn't a good thing about being an Eskimo. The bad thing, on the other hand is that it's cold enough to encourage a pretty hefty trade in spare parts for brass monkeys.

The cover depicts a passably dashing Eskimo about to sink a harpoon into the back of a cross-eyed walrus. One or the other of these is Thorak, Prince of Ice. Probably the walrus you get past all the covered th

Once you get past all the garbage they've covered the package with you're left with that old standby the ladders and platforms game 'Prince of Ice' that the elegant 'Prince of Ice' from the cover materialises on the screen with as much dash as a dead sheep and with a conk like an ant eater. Don't get me wrong, it's quite a fun game. It's just that the graphics are a little, shall we say, unimaginative and the sound does little more than belch occasionally.

Anyway, instead of ladders
there's icicles to slide up (??)
of ice and thin patches of ice,
which can only be trodden on

once, dotted about the place. The idea is to collect blocks of ice, dropping them through the levels to the river below, while avoiding dragons (on the polar icecap?), birds and sealions. These wee beasts can be brained with ice blocks dropped from above or rendered harmless for a while by eating pills that appear from time to time. Once a few blocks have been dumped in the river you can hop onto them and float away, not to an island paradise but to Thorak's igloo, and collect bonus points. And that, folks, is all there is to it — K.A.



Maker: ANIROG
Format: cassette
Price: \$6.95
Graphics: K
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: KK
Overall: K

SUPPLY LT
ette disc
5 \$15.95 d
KK
: NA
1838: KKK
KK

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LISTEN TO THE SERPENT

QUEST FOR THE GARDEN OF EDEN/CBM 64

Hang this man By his tongue. Phoenix specialise in this sort of thing — an arcade and an adventure until you tape, no adventure until you fetch a code from the end of the arcade game. The chances of lasting more than five seconds of the arcade are roughly on a par with the life expectancy of a polar bear in a volcano.

Their last little gem, *Attack on Windscale* for Auntie's favourite machine, the BBC, was so hideously difficult that the adventure never saw the light of day. So there was a certain feeling of relief when a packet was found supposedly containing the code 'Open only in dire emergency', it said 'Cause I'm a good boy, always goes by the book, that sort of thing. I opened the packet while the game was loading. Inside was a copy of the instructions (useful that, saves all the fuss and bother of looking on the back of the case) but no code for the adventure. So, crack that arcade game boys.

This is totally impossible. When the screen comes up you're standing on a bridge with a large black spider on it. Below, in the water is a rather ill-mannered gobbling fish and a bee in the middle. This has to be dodged while at the same time jumping over the spider as it patrols the bridge and keeping a wary eye on the bee should it decide that a good parking place for its sting might be your butt. Meanwhile you have to pick bricks from a pile and drop them into the water. The real problem in this game is the fish. It always hits. In one you and it always hits. In one game I lost all my lives literally as the screen came up (total playing time 3 seconds) which strikes me as more than a bit unfair.

I don't mind a difficult game, even prefer it, but this is daft. As for the adventure, how the hell should I know?

— K.A.

Maker: PHOENIX
Format: cassette
Price: £6.99
Graphics: KK
Playability: ??
Addictiveness: O
Overall: K



BIKERS WILL LIKE IT

**FULL THROTTLE/
SPECTRUM 48K**

Totally amazing sequel to Micromega's good-at-the-time bike race, *Deathchase*. Here author Mervyn Estcourt takes us out of the woods and onto the road. Pole Position-style, for a selection of bike-meets from San Marino to Silverstone. With a field of 40 other competitors on hand the competition has never been fiercer. Initially the graphics might seem a little bland, but the perspective FX are quite brilliant. Just lean that sucker over and see for yourself! Being no stranger to the world of two wheels I can vouch for the authenticity of the movement.

There's a couple of nice extras for hesitant rebels, like a learners' practice mode (vital if you wanna make an impression on the rest of the field) and a variety of tough 'n' easy tarmacs to test. We were also due to have gear changes but Micromega thought that unworkable. A lucky escape methinks. It's also accident free! Collisions merely result in a harmless (but annoying) speed penalty. Safety first, eh? Be advised, though, that a taut 'stick' is needed for prolonged rides. The keyboard layout is quite unmanageable. — S.K.

Maker: MICROMEGA
Format: cassette
Price: £6.95
Graphics: KK
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KKK
Overall: KKK

PASS THE FLIT

**RAPSCALLION/
SPECTRUM 48K**

Decidedly lightweight 'anti-mated adventure' from the home of Boris the Bee. Rapscallion, the ugly rogue, had usurped your kingdom and incarcerated you within his dungeons. All seems lost until a passing fairy princess bestows the gift of transmutation upon you (as is their wont). Suddenly strange powers course through your veins. With barely a thought you can become an eagle, or a fly. Revenge will be yours! With a dull pop you take the guise of a bluebottle and, er, fly.

There are three areas of play, the Wilderness, the Magic Labyrinth and the Castle, and each comprises several screens. However this large pitch seems to have been turfed at the expense of such old fashioned values as sound 'n' vision. The graphics in particular are exceptionally crude. Real Legoland stuff (frogs to eat the equally limp frogs they grow in fly!) It's possible they grow in stature once you penetrate the castle but who wants to stick around that long? Not many.



suspect... S.K.
Maker: BUG-BYTE
Format: cassette
Price: £6.95
Graphics: K
Playability: K
Addictiveness: K
Overall: K

KNOWING YOUR PYRITES

MAZE GOLD/VIC20

Neato maze roustabout for the generally dense VIC. Like most good V20 games the idea is intrinsically simple. Just grab as much gold as you can and then do a runner. Trying to foil you is a rather bland blue fiend capable of quite a pace. Luckily on the first couple of screens he's a little stupid (well he is unexpanded) but things soon hot up as you slash more and more cash. To complicate matters the maze is peppered with random electricity pylons which must also be avoided. Like the keyboard option they're bad news when touched.

There are six skill levels to master and you can entertain up to six monsters at a time. My limit was three and that was only achieved after much cursing. One of the better new prog for the 64's geriatric great-uncle. — S.K.

Maker: VISIONS
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Graphics: KK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: KK
Overall: KK

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NO SCORE

Commodore Basic is not great. In fact let's be quite blunt. It's bloody awful. There are a number of ways around this — extend it, install another Basic, etc. Another option, especially if you're into games, is a games designer. Scope is just such a beast.

The Bible-sized pack that it comes in makes great claims for itself: easy to use, powerful, write and publish games using simple English commands, beginner and competent programmer alike... and so it goes on. So where does that leave the prospective games crafter? First of all if you don't know the machine you're going to have problems. Scope is a compiled language, so it has to have space for writing and space in which to be compiled. If you compile it in the middle of young Sidney, the sound chip, anything could happen. Secondly it's primitive. Sure enough it makes life easier for sprites and sound but the way it handles variables and functions is hideous. No more than

52 single byte integers and 26 double byte integers. This may well be adequate for most purposes but the variable names can be only a single letter. This is true for line labels as well. The thought of coming back to a complicated piece of coding after a few months and trying to decipher something like that is frightening. If you're doing something complicated then it must be easy to follow. A subroutine called 'A' is not that by any standard.

Anyone who knows the 64 well enough to use Scope would be better off buying a good assembler. After all the Peeks and Pokes of Basic, assembly language is a doddle and of a much more general use than something as machine-specific as Scope. — K.A.

Game: SCOPE 64
Maker: ISP
Machine: COMMODORE 64
Format: cassette
Price: £17.95
Rating: K



BORN AGAIN

CHECKOUT/ BBC 'B'

In the corner of my room I've got a stack of Virgin games. Every so often I glance in that direction and have a good giggle.

But there's an exception to every rule, and *Checkout* seems to be it.

The game gets its name from its star, young Checkout Charlie. He's a rather seedy looking character with short legs and dark glasses. The reason for the glasses is easy to see; the colours are blind-flicking like a traffic light having a fit when something good happens.



Chas's mission in life, for reasons best known to him, is to change the colour of the floor in his room — twice, square by square. Running over a square a third time causes the square to revert to its original colour and has to be run over twice more.

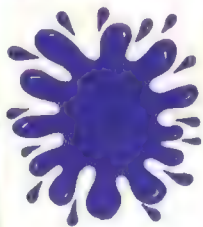
Death — obligatory in games of this kind — is dealt by a remote robot which patrols the edges of the room. At regular intervals, when the egg timer at the edge of the room runs out, this heap of scrap metal lets loose with a laser blast. If Charlie gets in the way he farts gently and fades from the screen. What a way to go. Good stuff. From Virgin, too. Keep an eye out for flying pigs. — K.A.

Maker: VIRGIN GAMES
Format: cassette
Price: £7.95
Graphics: KK
Playability: KK
Addiction: KK
Overall: KK

SPLAT/CBM 64

And it does splat, too. Very nicely, thank you. Someone out there has a real morbid sense of humour. When Zippy, the character involved, gets squashed, he spurts his inner organs everywhere. The idea is to move him around the looks like a berserk beetle, picking up things — no idea what they are, we're told — scattered around a maze. This is no ordinary maze, though, it slides around, it's big and God help Zippy if he gets trapped between a maze wall and the edge of the screen. The only thing that's going to shift him is a shovel and lots of soapy water.

SPLAT!



CHALLENGE
COMMODORE 64

Splat is a fine example of a simple idea applied well with an imaginative use of graphics. After all these *O-Bert*, *Frogger* and *God knows what* look-alikes it makes a change to see something with a spark of originality to it. Perhaps if it does well they can afford to give some instructions with it. — K.A.

Game: SPLAT
Maker: INCENTIVE
Machine: COMMODORE 64
Format: cassette
Price: £6.50
Rating: KK

WORSE THINGS HAPPEN/SPECTRUM

Neatly drawn nautical nonsense in which you must try and stem a thousand leaks on board an ailing ocean liner in order to guide it into port. The ship consists of about a dozen compartments, all of which begin to fountain like mad as you trundle frantically about on your rounds. Once sealed, these segments can be pumped dry in order to keep the tub afloat. Unfortunately sealing plates are in rather short supply and the little sea-droid who does all the work has a tendency to rust up and croak when exposed to salt water. Sailors will have a constant battle against the rising tide on their hands. Personally I believe it *Canute* be done (you're fired — Ed.) Visually it's the most impressive thing yet put by Silversoft and the challenge quota is considerably high.

Game: WORSE THINGS HAPPEN AT SEA
Maker: SILVERSOFT **Machine:** SPECTRUM 48K
Format: cassette **Price:** £5.95 **Rating:** KKK

DARTZ/SPECTRUM 48K

DAVEY DARTZ
A MURDER MYSTERY
A MURDER MYSTERY
A MURDER MYSTERY
A MURDER MYSTERY
A MURDER MYSTERY



K = Could Be Better
KK = Could Be Worse
KKK = Unsurpassable



KOSMIC KANGA/ SPECTRUM 48K

After much beating about the bush, Micromania have finally delivered. Following a handful of passable (but unexciting) arcade conversions they've produced their own original game - and it's a winner! In it you must help Kanga, an alien Kangaroo, phone home. This involves leaping tall buildings (amongst other things) with a single bound and avoiding all manner of obstacles in the ensuing scenarios. These include an airport, where trucks and planes do their



PLANETFALL/ SPECTRUM

Planetfall is basically a reworking of Pixel's *Trader* trilogy, this SF simulation takes you on a cut price tour of the galaxy with a cargo full of valuable commerce (computers, iron ore, Adidas trainers). The aim of this is to fill your coffers with more Galactic Groats than you've ever dreamt possible. Unlike *Trader* though you've no animated sequences to enjoy en route, instead there's a stream of different text displays, some of which are clearer than others. Be warned also that there's no option for solo play. The game is for between 2 and 12 traders. Something of an error methinks.

The game initialises with the announcement that "It takes a few moments to build the Universe." Once in, the number of options open to you are considerable. You can choose your destination, answer emergency requests from desperate planets, haggle with invisible aliens, outwit your opponents and generally behave like an irresponsible Harry Mudd.

Although competent and challenging I rather despised of Planetfall's lack of humour. It's all played so alarmingly straight! A shame because the situ has much scope for silliness. — S.K.

Maker: ARGUS PRESS
Format: SOFTWARE
Price: £6.99
Addictiveness: K
Playability: KK
Overall: KK

THE ODYSSEY OF HOPE/SPECTRUM 48K

Having ransacked Tolkien, the Legends of Ancient Greece seem to be next in line for software exploitation. And why not! The place was obviously made with adventures and simulations in mind.

In this scenario the gods of Mount Olympus are well cheesed off. Some rascal has stolen Hope from poor ol' Pandora's box and us mortals are in an advanced state of despair. The skies have blackened and lightning bolts stab from the sky. Zeus is clearly off his chump. Only you can venture out and recover Hope for all mankind.

Much effort has been spent on creating an authentic world here, and all to great effect. Indeed, followers of the period will have a definite advantage over us lesser mortals when it comes to solving the quest. All the locations are illustrated, but these appear instantly so playability has not been sacrificed. Written descriptions though are sparse. I'd have



preferred more evocative text to be honest, but then that's all a matter of taste.

From my initial wanderings I'd say that the game is of a fair size and offers adequate headaches. If the subject matter appeals then this is well worth checking out. — S.K.

Maker: MARTECH GAMES
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Graphics: KK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: K
Overall: KK



CUTHBERT IN SPACE CBM 64

After the jungle and Walkabout, Cuthbert finds himself ravaging Moronians. Everyone has to earn a living I suppose.

As the game starts, Cuthbert's space craft, which would probably be more at home in a carnival process-

ion, materialises Tardis style at the bottom of the screen. The cover slides back, revealing Cuthbert and the somewhat ludicrous message 'arriving on Vyxelt'. The screen is invaded by Catherine Wheels, or that's what they look like, and Cuthbert has to destroy/avoid these while picking up-fuel pods. As soon as he gets all the fuel pods he does a spot of looting before being dragged off to another planet that looks exactly the same as the previous one, with a different but equally stupid name. It's O.K. but there's a lot of room for improvement. Not the sort of thing I'd pay money for. — K.A.

Maker: MICRODEAL
Format: cassette/disc
Price: £4.75/£5.90
Graphics: KK
Playability: K
Addiction: K
Overall: K

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FLASH DASH FOR CASH

MURPHY/CBM 64

Who loves money? Altogether now 'WE DO', and Murphy in the best traditions of the human race in general, does too. The setting is a deserted mine — not such an uncommon sight in these troubled times — the objective, get rich. Murphy potters sedately around the mine, which fills three screens, gently but persuasively, by burying pickaxes in their chests.

I like this, a simple idea and maybe not as original as some but fun just the same. As I said the idea is to run Murphy around the maze, which is basically an arrangement of slopes and ladders, picking up bags of money. The robbers are remarkably resilient, shrugging off the effects of major surgery a-la-pickaxe after only a few seconds, but you can also keep them occupied for a while by braining them with the money bags. On top of all this there are the runaway carts. Although these pack a pretty mean whollop, if your timing is right you can grab hold of the tunnel's choppers, and drop into one as it passes under you. Once that lot's sorted out it's down to the game proper. The bags have to be picked up one at a time and dropped in the wheelbarrow at the top of the screen for full points. One of the bags is well and truly locked up. If anyone wants to know how to get it, cash only please to... — K.A.

Maker: MOGUL
Format: cassette
Price: £7.95
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KKK
Overall: KK

SWINE BEFORE PEARLS

THE PINK PEARL/
SPECTRUM 48K

A pot pourri of adventure clichés in which you play a famous explorer intent on finding the fabulous Pink Pearl of Taroani.

As befits an adventure with very little brain, the game has been populated by all manner of standard 'venture denizens' (trolls, werewolves, dragons, 222222) and the objects and treasures gleefully dispensed with no feel for either coherence or sense for either coherence or sense. You're just as likely to find a grenade as the Holy Grail amongst the on-screen debris! What's worse the author has shown little regard to possible player input, resulting in 'I don't understand' messages with almost every keystroke.

It's also a piece of cake to visit almost half of the 180 locations in the first half hour and then promptly gave up after encountering sudden death for the umpteenth time.

Maker: NOVAGEN
Format: cassette/disc
Price: £9.95/£12.95 disc
Graphics: KKK
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KKK
Overall: KKK

TRIFF

ENCOUNTER/CBM 64

What the hell was that? Too late. Whatever it was it was big, faster than a rat up a drainpipe and packed a wallop like Ali with a brick in his glove. *Encounter* is a great game. Based on the old *Battlezone* where you take a view of 3D landscape through the front of a tank, instead of vector graphics like *Battlezone*, this is in full solid graphics, four times as fast and unbelievably smooth.

The enemy, loosely described in the guff as a flying saucer, looks more like the ace of diamonds in the real thing it works quite well, lending a certain surrealist feel to the game. The tank can be driven anywhere around the landscape, which is dotted with large cylindrical objects a bit like gas storage tanks. What they are is anybody's guess but if you fire at them your shots just bounce off. When you eventually manage to catch, and even more unlikely hit, one of the saucers it explodes impressively in a mass of fragments.

Access to each screen is a novel idea. Once one screen has been cleared a gaping hole appears. Take a deep breath, head straight into it and once inside all hell lets loose. Large globes roar towards you and you have to avoid them all before getting on the next screen.

We could do with a few more like this for the Commodore, good games are sadly lacking. — K.A.

Maker: VIDEO FORCE
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Graphics: N/A
Playability: None
Addictiveness: None
Overall: Zippo

WARRIORS REVENGE/ SPECTRUM 48K

Stunningly inept text adventure apparently written by illiterate seven year olds for backward under lives. Yep, this is a real turkey. Infact it's SO BAD it's almost entertaining.

There's a certain perverse pleasure to be had wading through line after line of risible, pidgin english drivel in what seems a courageous move for publishing freedom. Video Force have taken the spelling-error factor to undreamt of lengths. Never have I seen so many errors grouped together in one place at one time. Having defeated a 'Monster from the bowls of hell' I found myself in 'an eanie graveyard guarded by two zombies.' It's a good job I didn't stop to drink at the well as the water tastes 'tear-able'. And don't think I'm giving you the highlights here! This awesome level of literacy is maintained throughout the game.

What's more the layout is sloppy (would you believe 'press "D" to die?'), the scenery totally unoriginal and the challenge level zero! Oh yeah, it's also written in BASIC. The thing is so dull it could well become a cult hit! How they have the cheek to threaten us with a sequel I'll never know! Horrendous. — S.K.





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K = So-so
KK = Good-o
KKK = Magnifico!

WE'RE OFFIN' THE BOFFINS

STARBASE/VIC 20

I knew that space was tough, but in *Starbase*, the scientists get wiped out like flies! You are a lone patroller, guarding a cache of scientists, busy trying to colonise planet XA2 (I thought that was a camera - never mind). The men of science are being attacked by alien space craft, and it's up to you to chuck 'em into the mighty void by showing them the pin-men scientists scurry around like ants at the bottom of the screen. Screen top displays remaining numbers of scientists and alien craft. The hordes of the enemy all there is to say. Action is jerky and there are no frills. No other screens. No rewards. No change. In fact if you should pause to think "Why am I doing this?" whilst you hurt your self from side to side of the screen, the answer can only be "to practice manual dexterity - you fool!" Think as it as a kind of piano practice for games-men. Commodore should know better. — N.X.

Maker: COMMODORE
Format: cassette
Price: £4.99
Graphics: K
Playability: Zilch
Addictiveness: K
Overall: K

KEYS HAVE THE GOLDEN TOUCH

TOUCHSTONE/DRAGON

Why is it that I am forced to use a joystick when one of the main selling points of the Dragon was that it had a proper keyboard? This game primarily involves vertical and horizontal movement plus firing a ray. For this you have to use a joystick but if you want to freeze or quit the game you need to stab the keyboard. Not only that, but an integral part of the game involves pressing the space bar and then returning to the joystick. Not very sensible really, especially considering that the response to the joystick control can be sluggish at crucial moments. This is a version of the arcade game where you make

Maker: MICRODEAL
Format: cassette
Price: £8.00
Graphics: KK
Playability: K
Addictiveness: KK
Overall: KK

KING TUT/DRAGON

Using the joystick you control a man who descends into tunnels to collect helmets which sit in various chambers. Return the helmets to the surface, one at a time, and five and a new set of tunnels faces you. Snakes parade the passages and a ghost can materialise anytime any where. Avoidance is your only means of defence and time is crucial. The quicker you achieve your task the greater the points tally. Take too long and the light goes out making it easy to blunder into a snake. Encountering a snake or ghost is fatal. King Tut is a simple game, well executed with many attractive details. Animation is effective and when a helmet is collected it appears on the man's head but if he gets caught it is left at that point for collection later. Control response is excellent. Unfortunately, as with many

Dragon games, the sound seems to be an afterthought and is typically awful. There are safe locations where one can pause and reflect on the next move although of course time is ticking away. A 'freeze' facility isn't mentioned but pressing BREAK achieves this while ENTER continues the game. Remember - you reach it first in BIG K!

All-action addicts may find it too repetitive or tame. However, for a lover of strategy combined with risk, an original and enjoyable game complete with screens and a score tally.

T.S.
Maker: TOM MIX
SOFTWARE
Format: cassette
Price: £8.00
Graphics: KK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: K
Overall: KK

I THINK I JUST HEARD THE FIRST WALLY OF SPRING

WALLIE GOES TO RHYME- LAND/CBM 64

Raindrops keep falling... on poor little Wallie. And for once I don't care if he drowns. You said it, Interceptor. Wat a Wallie!

To get right up my nose, just hand me a game that makes you suffer through a long, daft and supposedly 'cute' routine every time you want to restart.

Naff slogans, too, will get you up there. 'Prepare to die' kind of rubs you up the wrong way after you've just been senselessly annihilated for the 987th time. And I really don't understand why games are still made to do this. Those first tentative efforts at a new game are so vital. It's then you decide either: a) "Aha! What scroting game!" b) "Aha! A load of codswallop! I shall grind it into past with my stiletto!"

Thus driven into a frenzy, I was not fully receptive to Wallie's plight of being

chased by odd-bods and hailed on with lethal pink rain. Anyway, he was an all-too self-consciously 'zany' little tyke who had already put my back up just by existing. Add to this, the landscape, one of those from the neolithic period of vid games - when the sky was one colour and the mountains stuck out crudely like a row of sore thumbs in colour b. Wallie lopes along with a simple right to left scroll. Redolent of the earlier castigated Troopa Truck, fleeing relies not so much on skilful manipulation, but on memorising where the prat falls and assailants are. Good one Frankie Goes to Hollywood any day. — N.X.

Maker: INTERCEPTOR
SOFTWARE
Format: cassette
Price: £6.95
Graphics: K
Playability: K
Addictiveness: N/A
Overall: K

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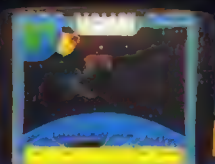
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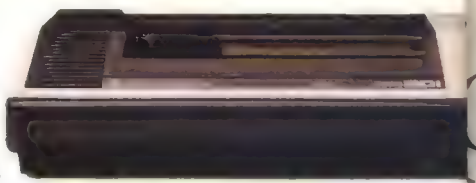
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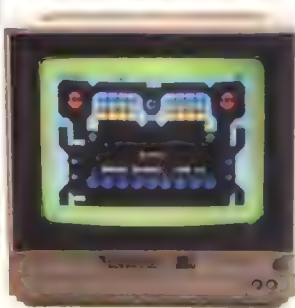
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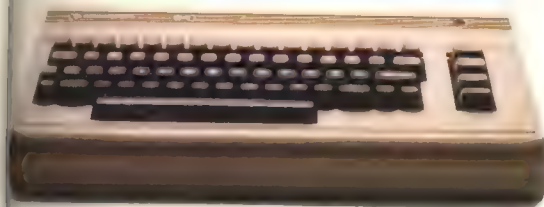
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```

$(N+1,M-1)=STR$(VAL A$(N+1,M-1)
*)
806 IF N<>5 AND M<>1 THEN LET C
$(N+1,M-1)=G$
810 IF M<>1 THEN LET A$(N,M-1)=
STR$(VAL A$(N,M-1)+1)
811 IF M<>1 THEN LET C$(N,M-1)=
G$
815 IF M<>5 THEN LET A$(N,M+1)=
STR$(VAL A$(N,M+1)+1)
816 IF M<>5 THEN LET C$(N,M+1)=
G$
820 IF N<>1 AND M<>5 THEN LET A
$(N-1,M+1)=STR$(VAL A$(N-1,M+1)
+1)
821 IF N<>1 AND M<>5 THEN LET C
$(N-1,M+1)=G$
825 IF N<>1 THEN LET A$(N-1,M)=
STR$(VAL A$(N-1,M)+1)
826 IF N<>1 THEN LET C$(N-1,M)=
G$
827 LET A$(N,M)="0"
828 LET C$(N,M)="0"
830 GOTO 700
8300 LET Y=Y+1
8301 LET P=P-1
8302 LET O=O+2
8303 IF Y<>6 THEN GOTO 182
8305 LET Y=1
8306 LET X=X+1
8307 LET P=P+6
8308 LET O=O-8
8309 IF X<>6 THEN GOTO 182
8310 GOTO 200
8311 LET X=0
8312 LET Y=0
8313 FOR L=1 TO 5
8314 FOR O=1 TO 6
8315 IF C$(L,O)="1" THEN LET X5=
VAL A$(L,O)
8316 IF C$(L,O)="2" THEN LET Y5=
VAL A$(L,O)
8317 NEXT O
8318 NEXT L
8319 IF C1 AND (X5=0 OR Y5=0) T
HEN GOTO 9050
8320 RETURN
8321 IF X5=0 THEN PRINT AT 20,0;
"PLAYER 1 HAS WON";
8322 IF Y5=0 THEN PRINT AT 20,0;
"PLAYER 2 HAS WON";
8323 PRINT "ANOTHER GAME Y/N"
8324
8357 INPUT Z$
8358 IF Z$="N" THEN STOP
8359 GOTO 45
8360 FOR P=1 TO 5
8361 PRINT AT 10+P,2+2*P;CHR$(3
+P)
8362 PRINT AT 9-P,2+2*P;P
8363 NEXT P
8364 RETURN

```

```

9600 PRINT AT 0,0;"HEXAGON IS FO
R 2 PLAYERS. PLAYED"
9602 PRINT "ON A 5*4 GRID OF HEX
AGONS."
9605 PRINT "EACH PERSON ALTERNATE
LY PLACES"
9610 PRINT "A PIECE IN A HEXAGON"
9615 PRINT "YOU MAY ONLY GO IN
AN EMPTY"
9620 PRINT "HEXAGON, OR ONE YOU
ALREADY HAVE"
9625 PRINT "SOME PIECES IN."
9630 PRINT "EACH TIME YOU GO IN
A HEXAGON"
9635 PRINT "THE NUMBER OF PIECES
IN THAT"
9640 PRINT "HEXAGON INCREASES BY
ONE."
9645 PRINT "WHEN THE NUMBER IN
ANY HEXAGON"
9650 PRINT "REACHES THE NUMBER O
F ADJACENT"
9655 PRINT "HEXAGONS ( EG ""6""
FOR A HEXAGON"
9660 PRINT "IN THE CENTRE) THEN
THAT HEXAGON"
9665 PRINT "EXPLODES. IT""S NUMB
ER GOES TO"
9670 PRINT "ZERO AND THE NUMBERS
IN ALL THE"
9675 PRINT "ADJACENT HEXAGONS GO
ES UP BY ONE"
9680 PRINT "ONE OF THESE IN TUR
N MAY NOW"
9685 PRINT "EXPLODE AND A CHAIN
REACTION"
9690 PRINT "OCCURS."
9691 PRINT " (PRESS NEW LINE TO
CARRY ON)"
9692 IF INKEY$="" THEN GOTO 9692
9693 CLS
9700 PRINT " HOWEVER IF YOU STAR
T A REACTION"
9705 PRINT "ALL THE SQUARES INTO
WHICH TO"
9710 PRINT "YOU EXPLODE BECOME Y
OURS."
9715 PRINT " YOU WIN WHEN YOUR O
PPONENT HAS"
9716 PRINT "NO PIECES."
9718 PRINT " PLAYER ONE""S PIE
CES ARE SHOWN"
9719 PRINT "AS NORMAL NUMBERS, W
HILE PLAYER"
9720 PRINT "TWO""S PIECES ARE IN
INVERSE"
9721 PRINT "VIDEO"
9725 PRINT " (PRESS NEW LINE TO
CARRY ON)"
9726 IF INKEY$="" THEN GOTO 9726
9727 CLS
9730 RETURN

```



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Adventure

the next step . . .

IT WAS while Clive the Dorkslayer was checking out the fabled Chalice of Chalknor that the Basilisk came out of its cave, and smelling fresh blood, charged.

Clive the Dorkslayer, half-elf, half-man, stood up in alarm as the scaly beast made its clumsy, scurrying rush. Should he use the Axe Logslayer or the Sword Nerdslayer? Or the silver, enchanted knife Foodslayer? Or should he trust in the powers of the magic helmet Hairslayer? Ought he, perhaps, to check over his stamina points before engaging the animal in no-holds-barred combat? Might he not profit — even at this late stage — by a quick suss of his leather

pack's contents?

Of course it might be that his best option would be to run for it.

At the penultimate instant before a ton of infuriated horn and bone landed on him, Clive the Dorkslayer decided that his strength was a little on the low side; he had actually half-unwrapped the cheese and onion sandwich before the behemoth, true to its fearsome reputation, had pounded him to a pale pink jelly.

Disgusted, Clive hauled the plug out of the back of his Spectrum, switched off the grimy Anglepoise lamp that illuminated his work area, and went to bed.



cover and sudden death through an antique land peopled by creatures from Grimms Brothers tales. There is almost always a Quest to achieve — often, an object or objects of value to be acquired, sometimes a useful magic word to be learned — and gripping adventures can take several months, of not longer, to complete without resort to Help.

However almost any Boys' Own situation is, by its nature, tailor-made for the computer adventure format — this being generally defined as the kind of game where you achieve results, not by waggling a joystick in real-time, but by typing in words and phrases which, if understood by the game's built-in sentence parser, can be translated by the software into a result, a movement, a gain, perhaps a sudden demise. Here lies their attraction — this constant puzzle of trying to learn or guess what words are actually

in the vocabulary, and then employing them at the right time, under the right circumstances, in the right combination and often in the right order (of events). Success at this means success at the adventure and the fulfilment of the Quest . . . and the hunt for a new game to buy.

These days the definition has become blurred, as both old and new techniques are applied in an attempt to broaden the technical definition and make the process more user-friendly and thus accessible to more people. Not all of us like crossword-like activity in the middle of the night ("Try KILL BOOT, fer Pete's sake, and let's get some kip!"). Not all of us are verbally facile. Not all of us have patience; and not all of us are loners — you need to have a taste for the latter to be a full-hearted adventure nut. So these days we have mainframe adventures playable by dozens of people at a time (none of whom knew each other); multiple-choice "adventures" like The Lords Of Midnight; multiple-player adventures like Empires; and to please the optically-inclined we of course have graphic adventures like

The Hobbit and independent-life real-time graphic adventures like Valhalla.

Themes have changed, too. The sword 'n sorcery motif still rules, though no longer unchallenged. You can be inside a giant deserted alien spacecraft, at an Agatha Christie country house murder, aboard a doomed cruise ship, or trying to get out of Cricklewood. You can move through political circles or "attain" Hampstead.

There is very little left of "real life" that isn't already in the adventure planning sage.

At the same time, one of Adventure's parent roots — Dungeons and Dragons role playing games — is moving towards the new common core — with the new generation of adventure paperbacks, with or without attached computer games. Interactive literature is already a reality. The first of all computer games is still — for many — the best, the most enduring and the one with the greatest continued potential.

So even if you're an arcade nut with a habit that craves blood . . . read on. You may not get much joystick action but you'll discover all the gore you could possibly want . . .

Don't Look Now, But Yaw



IT HAPPENED on the witching hour 'neath the glow of a lightning bolt. It took a sense of alarm and a definite recognition of the skull. Whipping out a pocket mirror, I saw a reflection of myself confronted by what appeared to be a grinning potato. My stony visage had finally crumpled with pleasure. I'd stumbled upon one of those rare delights, a genuinely funny adventure. The thing was called *Spoof*, for the 48K Spectrum from Runesoft. I cackled hideously long into the night.

Spoof is a standard format text prog that parodies all those now familiar sword 'n' sorcery clichés. Anyone with a fondness for the genre can't help but raise a smile as they wander past rotting wooden signposts proclaiming 'The Obligatory Mountain' and 'The Necessary Forest'. You take the guise of Yaw Nang (the tired one), a wretched peasant embroiled in a number of puzzling tasks. There's the shop-keeper who's really the Queen (yes, him) in disguise — he needs a lot of money for his new crown. But the enlightened individual who's called the legendary Golden Flower (well it gets chilly out there on the

rocks); the cheerful proprietor of The Bog Inn... I can't remember the rest of the cast.

Still these tasks are of little import. The game strengthens in its jokes and witty repartee. The telephone routine is a good example, and it doesn't take too much away! The scene takes place after a trudge across 'The Obligatory Mountain'. Imagine a telephone. It starts to ring.

Keaton: Um. Answer phone.

Spoof: "Hallo. Is that Dave?"

Keaton: "Um. No."

Spoof: "Can you get him for me? He'll probably be down on the beach. Shout him for me will you?"

Keaton: Um. Shout Dave.

Spoof: As I shout I see a figure on the beach. It waves to me and disappears into the cliff behind. Moments later he appears at the cliff-top singing about fish fingers or something. He stops singing and takes the phone from me. He puts the phone down. "I have to go to the light-house. Would you like to come?"

Keaton: Um. Yes.

Spoof: "Follow me," he says and then he disappears down the secret tunnel.

Keaton: Um. Follow Dave...

This quality of interaction is maintained throughout the game. Beautifully observed and precisely anticipated it's a real pleasure to play. Apparently

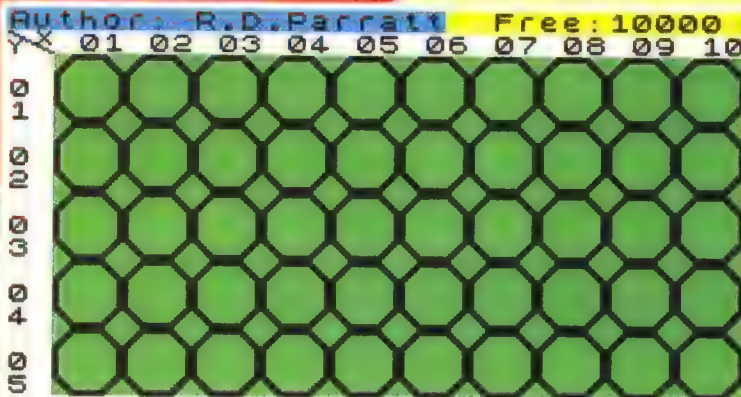
authors John Slack and Dave Stevenson intended this little offer on altogether larger, more sophisticated material.

We'd just finished this fully featured, heavy-duty Dungeons and Dragons adventure, says Slack, "and thought that the whole genre could do with a send-up. We bounced some ideas around and decided on *Spoof*. Spoof the magic dragon! It sounded about right. I think it's a good idea to have a bit of variety on the adventure scene. There's plenty of room for parody."

Favourite

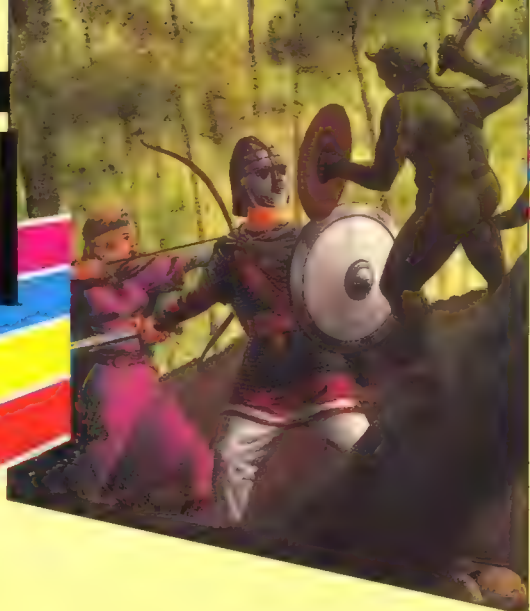
Both authors have their favourite sequences. "I love it all!" declares Stevenson with undue modesty. "No, I think the place names make for the most. They're so silly."

Slack is fond of the Owl and Cat Pussycat routine. "That whole section on the barge is really funny," he says. "I also like the double endings." He goes on to explain in detail and I suddenly realise that what I thought was an odd bug in the program is in fact all part of the joke! Slack and Stevenson are so pleased with the character of Yaw that he's slated to return at a later date. I for one will be waiting.



Plunge In To This Dungeon

THE ALREADY obese Spectrum adventure market seems set to swell some more with the arrival of a neat new game generator from Dream Software. Like Gilsoft's highly rated *Quill* system *The Dungeon Builder* enables you to write your own machine-code adventures without any previous programming know-



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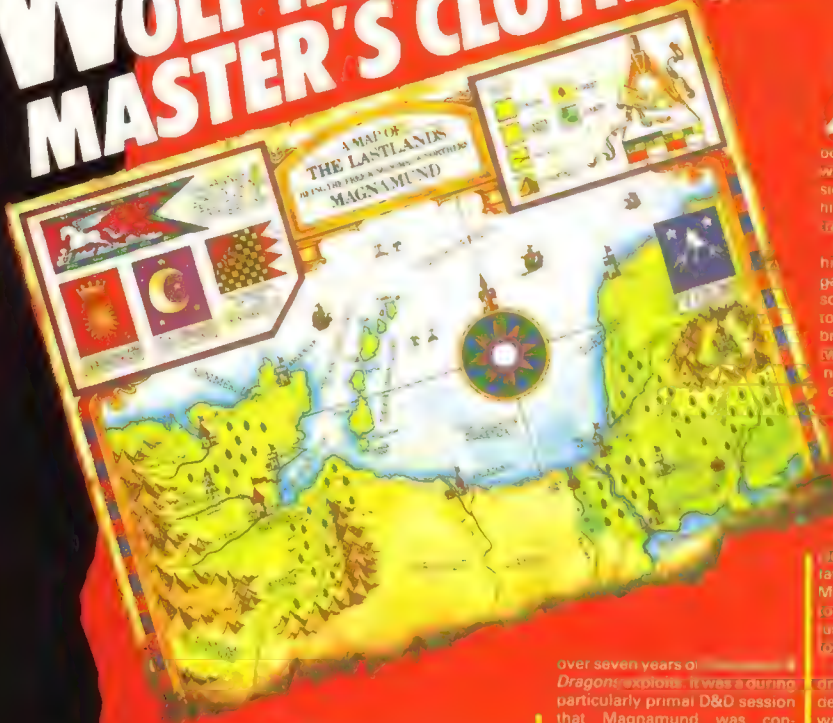
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WOLF IN DUNGEON MASTER'S CLOTHING

by Nicky Rodden



JOE DEVER 1982's *World Dungeons & Dragons* Champion, has hit the Software Road. His *Flight from the Dark* and *Fire on the Wolf* began life as role-playing adventure books, and now meet their electronic foils — text adventures with graphic illustrations. The two titles comprise the sixth of a mammoth adventure series, *Lone Wolf*. Each of the twelve episodes, published by Hutchinsons, will tie-in with an adventure book of the same name. Both can be played as self-contained units but rabid gamers will be pleased to find it possible to cross-reference between the two for a really comprehensive game. Initially for Spectrum, the series is being translated for the Commodore 64, and, notably, will be among the first available for the QL.

BIG K was chosen to be the very first magazine to play *Flight from the Dark*. Each screen is

detailed and complex as an old manuscript with a graphics window and text area below. You choose from the courses of action scrolled in the lower half of the screen, and the characters animate themselves accordingly. The graphics are excellent, and the adventure pushes the Spectrum's 48K to the limits.

In the game you are Wolf, kin to the Kai Lords. One day the sky is darkened by the sickening, leathery-winged Darklords. When they leave, you find yourself the sole survivor of your ancient race — Lone Wolf.

Our hero is about 15 years old in *Flight from the Dark*. He grows older and wiser through the episodes. Later he will acquire the skill of Dimensionality; the ability to travel through time and space. He'll need all the skill he can get for the final conflict. Lone Wolf's vow of the revenge starts him on a quest that will take him all the way through the world of Magnamund.

Lone Wolf has been fermenting in the mind of Joe Dever

over seven years of

Dragon exploits. It was during a particularly primal D&D session that Magnamund was conceived. "I was bringing together amorphous gassy formations; great, floating worlds of ice... and other strange phenomena" (he wouldn't part with the exact recipe) — "and POW! Worlds combusted into being!" And Joe had created Magnamund. And he saw that it was good.

Joe's youthful, ethereal looks belie his maturity. His low-key self-assuredness kind of sneaks around the back and hits you.

Joe, 28, set out on life's rich path as a musician. He moved over from double-bass to electric bass and worked with a lot of bands including Mike Oldfield. "I enjoyed it all at first." Then he found himself hired out to sessions with the punk bands of 1977-8.

"Suddenly, music was about anything but virtuosity. You had to dress the right way and share the same political pretensions." The era compounded a growing disillusionment, and Joe quit. He's recently written music for *Flight from the Dark*. "The Spectrum didn't allow for much ela-

oration. I'm looking forward to writing for the Commodore version." But Joe doesn't program himself. *Lone Wolf* is being translated for him.

Joe has a passion for military history, was an David board games man and collected lead soldiers for years. This drew him to London's Games Centre, a branch of which he managed for two years. It was during a business trip to Los Angeles that he encountered D&D. "One game and I was hooked." He finally won the championships in LA.

A week long marathon Joe was the only Brit there. There was no disadvantage. He says, "Every competitor has to take on all character classes: fighter, cleric, wizard and thief." Joe's favoured role is that of Dungeon Master. "It's an art — you've got to get the balance of the game just right. Neither too hard nor too easy."

Joe's drawing together of the clans, a decade or so ago, something was stirring amongst the idle young of America's college campuses. It was an ongoing Dungeonsing and Dragoning situation. It spread. In such a big way that the ex-Wisconsin postman Gary Gygax, first to document D&D by creating its two rule books, for Masters and players, declared a staggering \$52 million profit in 1982, making D&D the sixth fastest growing industry in the USA!

And from the East came the quiet literary genius of Professor Tolkien. His fertile imagination met that of thousands of others somewhere in Middle-Earth — a land created privately for his son.

Then there was computer adventure. Even prehistoric mainframes found themselves harbingers of adventuring data as futuristic, hard-bitten programmers eked out available K's in down-time. But it's with the micro that adventure is coming into its own.

We'll keep you informed of happenings. Watch out for news of *Lone Wolf*. And expect some surprises.

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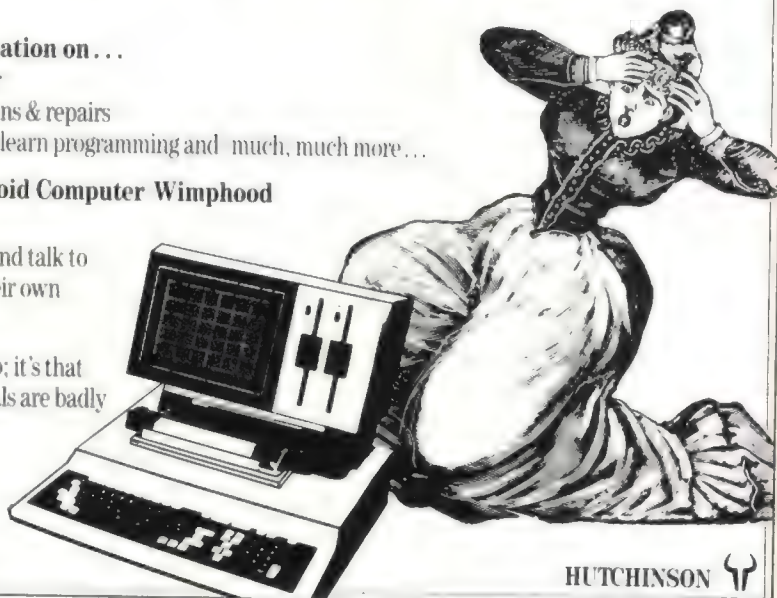
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The computer game is DEAD...

MUD, MUD GLORIOUS MUD...

No, not that dreary brown stuff — this M.U.D. stands for "Multi-User Dungeon", and is a mammoth-scale Adventure run on Essex University's DEC PDP-11 ... with a little help from a few hundred punters (one as far away as Japan). DAVID MACHIN's been going on-line for a while now. Here's his report...

WELL, IT had to happen, didn't it? Just when everyone thought that adventure games had finally reached a point where nothing else could happen, something did. Just as Matthew Smith thought that he had found the last Manic gold mine, along came MUD, as evil-smelling as ever, and, to quote from Mr Adventure himself, it really hits the spot!

No, the bugs haven't managed to mangle my memory map. Yet. What I am talking about is MUD, which stands for Multi-User Dungeons & Dragons. "Oh, not D & D again ... old hat!" I hear you all cry. Maybe. But that isn't what makes this game special. The special bit is that you play this adventure over the phone using a modem, on a program around 2 megabytes long, and YOU ARE NOT ALONE! Indeed, around 36 other hackers can play the same game at the same time that you are ... literally. That is to say, if you want the torch at the same time as old Eric over there, you'll either have to beat him to it, or fight over it! To play the game you need a suitable scrolling dumb terminal, preferably 80 column (e.g. a BBC Micro with a dumb terminal program), a 1200 baud modem, and an account with British Telecom's Packet Switch Stream, of which more later.

The computer that the program runs on is a rather large (if old) DEC 10, located at Essex University. As you can imagine, a lot of the students have better things to do than simply play MUD all day (that's their story!), and if all the ports were occupied by manic mud-wallowers while the amiable academics were working on wonder-projects, they would begin to gibber over their patriarchal,



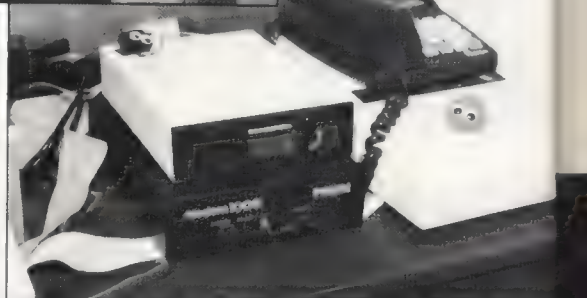
coffee-stained keyboards. For this reason, the MUD program can only be activated between midnight and six o'clock in the morning. This keeps the nocturnal MUD-slingers away from the students, and so everybody's happy (till the hackers start messing around, and snaffling passwords!).

Once you have managed to log on to the system (and that would make quite a good adventure game in itself!), you are asked to enter the name that you wish to be called in MUD. This is rather like a CB 'handle', and can be anything from 'Fred' to 'Bilbo'. You are then asked what sex you are, and, if the computer doesn't recognise the name that you have entered as someone who has played before, it asks you to donate a password for your character, so that other MUD hackers can't use your persona.

Once you have told the computer who you are, typing WHO gives you a list of all the people who are currently logged on to the system. You can follow anyone who is at the same location as you, attempt to kill them, and also talk to them, and I found this probably the most interesting part of the game, you can use the command SHOUT, followed by a message, and everyone in the adventure will be informed of what you say. However, they don't know who said it, only your sex. For example, if you typed SHOUT HELLO THERE!! the words "A male voice shouts 'HELLO THERE' " would appear on everyone's screen, no matter what they are doing at that particular time. Their screen just scrolls, and the message pops up. You can communicate privately with someone by simply

Harry Carpenter to shame.

The descriptions of the locations on the game are extremely lengthy. Having the power of a mainframe to play an adventure certainly makes a difference. You can switch to a smaller description if you are more experienced, by using the command BRIEF. Typing SCORE tells you not only how many points you have got, but also how much experience you have, using have ratings which range from novice, the bottom level, up to Wizard, of which (witch?! there



saying the person's name, followed by a message. For example, 'SAMANTHA, ARE YOUR PERIPHERALS COMPATIBLE WITH MINE?' would inform Samantha that someone is trying to interface with her (Draw your own conclusions.) Then if you want to tell everyone at a certain location something, you simply use a quote, eg: 'HELLO EVERYBODY' would send your greeting to everyone at the same location as yourself.

Of course, you can also play the adventure, but you can easily find yourself doing nothing else but talk to people all night. When I have been playing, I have spoken to people all over the country, from all walks of life, and using all sorts of micros. The type of computer that the people are using does not matter. The couple of nights that I was on, I spoke to people using Spectrums, BBCs, Apples, a Commodore 64, and even someone with not one, but THREE QLs!! (None of them worked.)

The fights on MUD have to be seen to be believed. I don't know quite how the program works it all out, but the running commentaries that are given put

were two when I played. The system is incredibly user friendly, and it has a very large HELP file, which will tell the user all he wants to know about playing the game ... apart from how to solve it.

To play the game, you need a suitable terminal, and a modem. You also require an account with British Telecom's Packet Switch Stream. This is far too complex to explain here, and would really warrant an article in itself, but the general idea is that you can contact the Essex computer using special data lines, specifically designed for the transmission of data, not voices. However, you access these lines using a normal phone, and normally at local rates. You also have to pay around £6.00 a quarter for the use of the PSS system. For more details ring PSS on 01-920-0661.

I don't think that "normal" adventure games will ever be quite the same again. When you put down your phone, and reload your adventure disc menu, you can't really decide which one to play any more. They have all suddenly lost their appeal. With only one person playing, things just aren't the same!

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Books Do Furnish A Game

There are books, computer books and — increasingly — computer adventure books. JOHN CONQUEST put on his lorgnettes and had a good squint at some latest examples of this rapidly-growing literary genre.

WITH EVERY publisher in the world trying to jump on the computer bandwagon (I know, but you try telling them), it's a bit odd that adventure gaming (books for) is, for the time being anyway, monopolised by just two, Duckworth and Sunshine. Duckworth, small long-established company, field the Gerrard brothers, Mike and Peter; while computer book specialists Sunshine's team is the editorial staff of *Micro Adventurer* magazine.

Peter Gerrard, author of Romik's adventure games *Fool's Gold* and *Tomb of Xeiops*, is a man for all machines, though his speciality is the Commodore 64. His *EXPLORING ADVENTURES* series, at £6.95 each (for some reason most computer books are £6.95), cover the 64, Atari, Spectrum, Dragon, BBC (revised Big K issue 5), Oric, Electron and VIC, with Amstrad on the way. All the volumes share a common framework and indeed a couple of identical chapters on adventure games in general, and all have listings for the same three games (also available on cassette at £7.95). The meat of the books, however, is the detailed examination of inputting information, room mapping, vocabulary, routines and so on, which are clear and specific.

The *FURTHER ADVENTURES* series (snappy title, eh?), due this autumn for 64, Spectrum, Electron and Dragon, will cover graphics, machine code, role playing and multi-player game programming with examples



that will, again, be available on cassette.

Along similar lines, Sunshine's offerings are *SPECTRUM ADVENTURES* by Tony Bridge & Roy Carnell, *COMMODORE ADVENTURES* by Mike Grace, and *ATARI ADVENTURES* by Tony Bridge, all sub-titled "A guide to playing and writing adventures" and £5.95 each (some mistake, surely?). The first (playing) half has a very high flannel content and, in the Atari book, you can almost hear Bridge's sigh of

relief as he opens the second half with "Now at last we're getting down to some serious programming!" Not the most fluent writer in the world, Bridge is on much firmer ground when he gets down to the nuts and bolts of creating dungeons, monsters, combat systems, graphics, movement and menus.

If you're looking at the choice between Atari, 64 or Spectrum books, Duckworth's certainly spend more time on the actual programming, 167 pages to Sun-

shine's 42, with another volume to come. But this may be an unfair way of looking at it. Gerrard spells everything out slowly and carefully, while Bridge assumes the reader can keep up.

What all the above have in common is an inordinate amount of padding, duplication and downright waffling — both Duckworth and Sunshine could use a good editor. By far the best writer of the adventure game crowd is Mike Gerrard, so it's a pity he doesn't have a proper book of his own. His *THE ADVENTURER'S NOTEBOOK* (£3.95) is a playing aid, and a good one. The bulk of it is pages of ready-made skeleton maps and pages for entering locations, objects found, actions tried and results, recognised words and general notes. The idea is to do away with that awful mess of bits of paper, covered in scrawls, cryptic notes and crossings out, incomprehensible even to their maker (you, sunshine) and collect them all into one convenient package. I love the idea and up to a point it works very well, but it would have been even better in a ring binder rather than spiral bound. Gerrard's introduction which is a great read, covers hints, history, recommended adventures (by machine), useful addresses and synonyms.

The Brothers Gerrard collaborated on *THE ADVENTURER'S COMPANION* (£3.95) which is a real bone of contention. This one is very straightforward — solutions, not hints, not suggestions, not clues, but 100%, full-frontal, explicit solutions to the problems of *The Hobbit*, *Colossal Cave Adventure* (a.k.a. *Adventure*, a.k.a. *Adventures*, a.k.a. *Colossal Cave*), *Adventureland* and *Pirate Adventure*. Anybody who's solved any of these games the hard way would be justified in being pretty irritated by the idea of just looking up the answer, but the many people who've got themselves stuck in one will find it a godsend. Trouble is that to get the best value out of these games you'd have to use this book only as a last resort, which is asking for superhuman self-restraint. Personally I would have preferred a collection of hints, along the lines of Level 9's foxy but invaluable clue sheets, which help you without giving everything away, for a much wider range of games.

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NOT FOR SALE: USED AUSTIN(29)

LLEVEL 9 Computing, source of *Colossal Adventure*, *Adventure Quest*, *Dungeon Adventure*, *Snowball* and *Lords of Time*, is very much a family affair. From their home on the outskirts of High Wycombe, massed Austins prepare to ruin the working and sleeping patterns of innocent owners of a range of micros that includes the BBC, Spectrum, 64, Ataris, Lynx and Amstrad on the way.

Mike and Nick are the coders and interpreters; Margaret, with the help of Mother, runs the business side; while designer Pete sits at the centre of the web, working on new and ever more fiendish adventure games.

Pete, now 29, studied natural sciences at Cambridge where he developed two different interests that go a long way in explaining Level 9 — *Dungeons & Dragons* and computers. Abandoning biology, he spent a year in commercial computing, writing Cobol before moving to developing scientific systems on a DEC-type machine. Just

before the company fell apart, he joined Hewlett-Packard ("definitely a mistake") only to find that their promised 'research lab' was in fact a coding shop.

Along the way he started Level 9 which, with a Basic utility and a Valhalla (without pictures) game for Nascoms, had become a profitable hobby. It got on its present course with his implementation of *Colossal Adventure* (see page 54) which included his own endgame. His first complete design, however, was *Adventure Quest*, which marked the first move away from Nascoms.

The BBC had just been launched: "We saw it as a good machine, nice to work on and obviously it would sell. I guess I'm different. The traditional route is via the Spectrum, but we didn't like the Spectrum as a machine to write programs on. It's not got the facilities that the BBC has. So we went for the BBC first and produced Spectrum versions later". These days, though, Pete sees the BBC as the limiting machine that restricts game development.

Quest was followed by *Dungeon Adventure* — still Pete's favourite — for BBC,

Spectrum and Nascom. But in June 1983, fed up with his job and seeing that professionalism was the coming thing in computer games, he quit and Level 9 became a full-time occupation with brother Mike, who had just left school, pitching in.

With the 'Middle Earth' trilogy behind him, Pete turned next to science fiction. The massive 7000-location *Snowball*, the first in a projected, and fully realised, *Silicon Dream* trilogy (*Return to Eden* should be out soon, with *The Worm in Paradise* to follow) has achieved justified fame, voted a favourite by adventure gamers.

Lords of Time, designed by Sue Gazzard but altered and amended by Pete completes the current list. "It's slightly easier than *Dungeon Adventure*. People were writing and saying the games were getting too hard. I'm going back to making them harder now. Future ones are going to be pretty hard."

Future ones, at the moment, are *Red Moon*, Level 9's first graphics game, and *Erik the Viking*, based on Terry Jones' prize-winning children's book and with stunning graphics. *Red Moon* was designed by Dave Williamson, but once again heavily worked over by Pete. "When we get designs from other people, we usually have to make loads of changes. I had to censor Dave's descriptions. He'd got dead bodies rotting round every corner!"

"*Erik* is probably the last game to be done entirely by me. I think in future I'll have to spend less time on each one. It was interesting to read an interview with Scott Adams where he said he could design a game in a week and code it in another two. It's physically impossible to do our games in anywhere near this time — each one takes a couple of months. We've got 200 locations while Adams only has to worry about 30.

So who does Pete admire? "Infocom. I like their sense of humour. I've gone off Adventures that take themselves deadly serious. I prefer things where you take a wrong turning and fall into a sewer rather than get crushed by a rock, for instance, and come out smelling as awful as the other characters avoid you. I don't like adventure games where you go in and kill everything. I prefer games with puzzles and atmosphere where you have to think before acting.

"One of the directions I see adventure games going is towards multi-player games — and that very rapidly becomes role-playing. The problem is the interaction. Parties would be virtually impossible; people wouldn't be willing to sit around and wait for you".

The key question is, of course, how does Austin squeeze 300K of Fortran program into 32K? The answer is 'a-code'. "To write in, it's like a machine code in its facilities, for an idealised adventure machine, that's the high-brow explanation. The low-brow one is that it's a very simplified version of Basic which compiles down into a couple of bytes for each code. Normally Basics compress the key word but hold the rest of the statement in text. What a-code does is compress the whole lot down into a single instruction, rather like an assembler, but it doesn't actually go right the way down to machine code. It's really very compact and it's portable as well, so effectively all our games are interpreted. We have an a-code interpreter on each machine."

With the actual games well sorted out, Pete's main concern these days is to make Level 9 more professional. Already the new packaging is a considerable advance on the old, but even this is to be overtaken. "We'd like to have artwork that you wouldn't mind hanging on your wall." Even the box design is being reworked for user convenience. Advertising is going to be put in the hands of an agency, routine office work given to a secretary — but what Austin is really looking for is a full-time artist. "There's somebody I'd really like to use if I can persuade him, but you can't really say that there's a secure future in computer games. Imagine's overheads were absurdly high — cars and office block and all those trimmings. We keep ours as low as we can, though I suppose we'll need proper premises sometime."

Level 9's future looks pretty secure. A strong back list — Pete stands by every title, which must be pretty rare among game companies — and sound, well thought-out future plans. *Erik* is pretty certain to be a Xmas biggie, while the move into graphics will bring them into a whole new market. And if Pete Austin is half as good at pictures as he is at text, then don't wait for reviews of *Red Moon* and *Erik the Viking*.

Adventure-makers are a special breed. JOHN CONQUEST and NICKY XIKLUNA talked to a couple of megastars in the field.

CODENAME VELNOR



DEREK BREWSTER has a thing about making complicated plans to save the universe

Well, we're all entitled to our little peccadilloes. Derek's just happened to have produced two best-selling, highly-complex games — *Velnor's Lair* and *Codename Mat*. He's also written *Haunted Hedges* and *Starclash* for Micro Mega, and is currently working on an un-named Indiana-style game

Velnor's Lair is compulsive and concise. What strikes most people is Derek's ability to conjure up vivid and atmospheric word-pictures in just a few staccato sentences. But the *Lair*'s been around awhile now. Would he not tap in some illustrations if he were writing it today?

"Nope. Graphics have become like chips. (Polato version). People expect to have them with everything. The result is a preponderance of low-level graphic adventures. They're boring and lurid and totally lack atmosphere. But yer real connoisseur — he still goes for text adventures."

But no man is an island. And Derek's not stuck his neck out too far in the war of grey matter versus colour splatter. He's conceded 3K to the winning side in his new release — *Kintilla*

It took Derek one and a half years to write *Kintilla* for Quicksilva. The game features 32 characters and 50 collectable objects. It's a double first for Adventure in that it'll compute whole sentences, and it incorporates edit mode over previous commands

Welcome attributes you'll agree. I for one get cheesed off having to reduce my vocabulary to that of a trepanned troll every time I want

to play an Adventure. And I certainly miss edit mode after having had intimate knowledge of a word pro

Kintilla carries on from where *Velnor* left off. The story goes thus: After *Velnor* was vanquished, there remained a corridor that led from Earth to Hell. The evil demon Grako sped along it, seizing *Velnor's* moonstone as he went. Naturally, this enabled him to become supreme power on Earth, to be valiantly vanquished by you alone

Brewster has tired of stock fantasy critters, and has come up with his own inventory. So beware of Zats, Argamoles and Rotting Quark, amongst others. Another word of warning — polish up your *Velnor* before you play *Killiam* — I have it from the horse's mouth that it's dashed difficult. But Derek has a clue for Big K'ers. "Remember that the game is named after a certain sword. That's VERY IMPORTANT." We have it noted, Derek

The Brewster Catalogue is certainly one that sorts out the men from the molluscs. Speaking as the latter, *Codename Mat* left me completely floored. I admired the brilliant programming that bought this *Star Raiders/Star Trek*-style spectacular to life. As Mat, you have a great variety of technology in your space-craft. You have a long distance tracking device, a scan across the solar system, and control panel. You speed through the stars (cruise speed and warp too), or you can take a peek over your shoulder through the back window — and see the stars speeding away from you. Corl

Clever stuff. But masterminding the whole gismo to save the Universe became too much for me. I had to boldly go where no Xikluna had gone before — and got lost. Then I was assailed by so

much flak that I can only compare what happened to an average working day at Big K. Why did Derek produce such a complicated game?

"A really good game has to be as believable as possible. It needs thought, time and has to be worked out perfectly. Absolutely everything must flow into a kind of universal master-plan. That's most obvious in the case of adventure. I mean you can't have an iceberg next to a desert, can you?"

So how did Derek stumble across his proclivities?

"I was at University in Newcastle — and started playing *Colossal Cave* on the mainframe. I got hopelessly hooked, and never stopped playing. One day it struck me that the game lacked realism. There was no atmosphere, and the combat sequences weren't up to much. So I thought I'd have a go. That was the first of *Velnor's Lair* — except at that stage it was just called 'Derek's Adventure'. The problem was that the compiler I was working

with only possessed 20K of memory. I was a bit too shy to ask for more."

Luckily for posterity, the Spectrum arrived in the nick of time. (Fanfare). Derek translated, expanded and renamed 'Derek's Adventure', and Quicksilva rapidly crossed the Brewster palm with gold. Well, silver.

What does Derek do now in his spare time?

"Oh, I'm doing a PhD in geo-physics. Rock magnetism, actually, and how it affects the movement of the Earth's crust. I'm trying to find a way of stimulating the attraction of rocks to one another in a laboratory. You know."

Sure I do... Anything else?

"Sleeping. I did it very well all through school. I like my freedoms best of all. That's why writing games for a living suits me down to the ground. I really enjoy it. I make a living and I don't have to work nine-to-five."

Touch of the perennial student perhaps?

"Well, maybe just a touch."





CLASSIC GAMES OF OUR TIME

No. 6: COLOSSAL ADVENTURE (LEVEL 9) Orig. Colossal Cave

AND THE WORD WAS XYZZY!



I'VE GOT a map of the pirate's maze. What have you got?"
"The pirate's maze! Hot dog!"

Let's think... do you know how to get past the troll for free?"

"Really? Not bad! Anything else?"

"Well that's pretty good isn't it? OK, how to kill the dragon."

"Done."

"You certainly have been."

I spent the winter of 1982/3 haggling like this. The office had just acquired a word processor and the suppliers threw in a disc labelled 'Adventure. To play with'. Not a whole lot of word processing got done those first few weeks, and the game became

an office obsession. When the top brass came past the excited little groups hunched round the monitor, we'd tell them that it was hands-on experience. It seemed to keep them happy. Then we found that other people were playing it too, and the trading began. In those days there weren't any helpful books.

What we'd been given was a genuine, no-argument classic, the kind of thing that will get a chapter to itself when professors start writing the history of computing. Its origins lie far back in the very dawn of the computer age, around 1975, when the first version, variously known as 'Adventure', 'Adventures', 'Colossal Cave' or 'Colossal Cave Adventure', was created by two gentlemen named Willie Crowther and Don Woods.

Some might say that creating games with no redeeming intellectual, scientific or social value using multi-million dollar equipment and valuable computer time, was a prime example of the tendency of Homo Ludens to reduce everything to play. Others might cite it as a glaring instance of irresponsible computer freaks deliberately abusing their employers' trust. Most of us will just be glad that in that golden moment, the adventure game was born.

Crowther and Woods' game was written in Fortran (300K of it!) and ran on DEC PDP 11s, but was soon translated into other mainframe versions. An American business computer magazine survey showed that the average company lost two full weeks of programmers' time whenever the staff laid their hands on an implementation of 'Adventure'.

Translation

The game's translation from mainframes to micros was in three stages. First came a CP/M version, painfully slow, that ran on many business machines (such as ours). Then came Jim Butterfield's condensed version for PETs and a rather primitive assembler version for IBMs, the game being in the public domain. Finally came the fully matured version — Level 9's.

'Colossal Adventure', as Level 9 dubbed it, was originally intended to be a complete version of the game for micros, with their own a-code making it possible to squeeze the whole 300K's worth into 32K. However, after advertising it as a 200 location adventure, when Level 9's Pete Austin sat down and counted them, he found to his horror that there were actually only 130 odd. Being a man of his word, he promptly added a 70 location endgame, and that's the version that you can get for virtually any computer.

Colossal Adventure illustrates from the word Go the importance of the Five Golden Rules Of Adventure Gaming — 1. Make a map. 2.

Everything is there for a reason. 3. SAVE before you do anything that looks chancy. 4. Read all descriptions very carefully. 5. You haven't got all day. The fact that nobody has come up with a game that adds to these shows how sound Crowther and Woods' pioneering work was.

Most of these rules should be obvious, though in my experience many players aren't fully aware of them or their implications. Mapping mazes, for instance, ought to be dead easy, but I was able to trade my maps for Colossal Adventures for solutions to real problems.

The map bears directly on the time aspect. At the beginning of Colossal Adventure you find a lamp which you can switch on. However you can also switch it off, and you need to do this whenever possible because it will burn out sooner or later, leaving you to break your neck in the dark. With a map you can wind the game up before the batteries give out. Otherwise you'll have to put coins in the battery dispenser. What battery dispenser? That's your problem, chum.

Colossal Adventure set the standard for puzzle setting in later games. Call it the Golden Rule for designers — a game should not be impossible to solve — a rule that is not always observed even now. The solutions are devious, complicated and sometimes downright bizarre (though Level 9 accidentally abolished my favourite, how to kill the dragon, in their version), but there's always an answer.

At one time Level 9 used to provide a one problem solution per player services. You got, and still get, an envelope with your copy which you could use once, and once only, to get out of a jam. This didn't work out too well, so now they send you, on request, a clue sheet which will at least point you in the right direction. On top of this you can find answers to many of the problems in various adventure game books (see page 10), which regularly use the game as an illustration of the genre.

There are a number of differences between Level 9's version and the original. Some are relatively minor; one of the treasures has been

CONTINUED ON PAGE 59

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What Next From The House Of *Hobbit*

Since the appearance of the dreaded Bilbo and the even more dreaded Thorin Oakenshield to these many moons ago, Melbourne House has acquired a heavy rep as an adventure games company (despite more than a few balancing arcade offerings). Now the "Wizards from Aus" are conjuring up a whole new slew of adventures. RICHARD BURTON investigates . . .

SHERLOCK (Spectrum 48K, Commodore 64). Despite a long delay of almost QL proportions, Melbourne House have finally released their much-touted Sherlock Holmes adventure. Expectant punters can at last don the famous deerstalker and, via the wonders of *Inglish* and *Animtalk*, deduce their way through a complex case involving Holmes, Watson and a cast of dozens. Limited graphics and real-time play help make this one of the more challenging adventure games to appear on the

scene. Out now, cassette format, £14.95. (Sherlock is BIG K's Pick of the Month. See full review on page 15)

ZIM SALA BIM (Commodore 64). Features smooth, arcade-style graphics which depict every location in the Arabian-inspired graphic adventure. Murder, mystery and intrigue abound and you move your character through the desert and the Sultan's seemingly impenetrable fortress. Control is by joystick or cursor keys plus text input. Graphics by Russell Com-

te, who was responsible for the brilliant visuals of *Mugsy*. *Zim Sala Bim* is the first in a line of graphic adventures for the CBM 64. Cassette based, it costs £9.95 and should be out now.

WILD DOGS

CASTLE OF TERROR (Commodore 64). Everyone's favourite vampire is back. This time Draculur (no kidding, that's how they spell it) has locked a maiden in his tower. You must make a trip through the proverbial village to the castle, then survive a maze of haunted passages infested by wild dogs and armoured knights (bit of genre-mixing here) to perform the traditional rescue. Billed as "... The next milestone in sophisticated graphic/text adventures since *The Hobbit*" (where

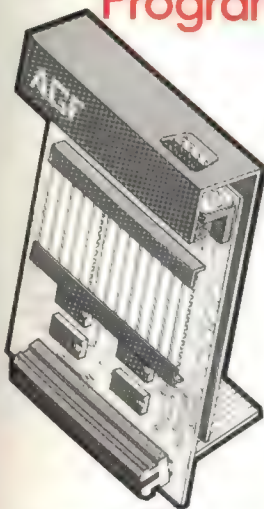
have we heard that before?) *Castle of Terror* combines advanced phrase-handling input along with colour graphics and sound. Due out in mid-October, the game comes in cassette format for £9.95.

HAMPSTEAD (Commodore 64, Spectrum 48K). The answer to every closet capitalist's dream — you must lie and cheat your way up the social ladder from the depths of Harlesden to the trendy heights of Hampstead. Conceived in Britain the game was coded and packaged in Aus. Available now in text only version for the Spectrum 48K and with graphics on the CBM 64.

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moved, it is, if anything, easier to find, and one of the utilities (the food) has been shifted and takes a bit of work to acquire. More crucial is the limit on how much you can carry. Level 9 have rather cruelly cut this down from seven items to four, which means that you have to get back to base to unload treasures far more often. All that running around means that your lamp is more likely to burn out before you've finished. And if the pirate gets you with two treasures, you're in real trouble, because you can't carry them and the chest (assuming that you can find them at all, that is) and your lamp and your axe at the same time, so it's either two trips or, horrors, drop the axe before you go in the maze. Pretty unpalatable alternatives, what?

Another small, but tricky change is that Level 9 don't remind you about the axe after you've thrown it at a dwarf, which is OK as long as you're still fighting, but makes it very easy to forget it after you've killed the little brute. This can be very embarrassing later on when you find you haven't got it any more, inevitably when you really need it.

But the big, big difference is the endgame. The original game had 350 points to win, at least 1 of which was strictly for perfectionists (Spelunker's Gazette). Level 9's has 1100, and boy you have to work hard for them. The endgame is a fiendishly difficult race against time, with a particularly brutal maze bang across your only route. What's more, none of the guidebooks covers it, so you are on your own.

Even by Level 9's present standards, 'Colossal Adventure' is not the best game available, nor the most engrossing, the most difficult, the most fun, or indeed the most anything. Compared to *Snowball*, *Zork*, *The Hobbit* to *Lords of Midnight* it might seem primitive and restricted, solvable by methodical plodding. But — and it's a very big 'but' — but it is the grand original, the prototype game from which all the rest have sprung, the inspiration for games that have surpassed it in almost every way, but can never claim that essential creative spark. In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was XYZZY.

FOR THIS MAN, MARKED THE SPOT...

As the author of *Adventure X* (BIG K Issue #2), STEVE CRADDOCK knows a thing or two about getting started. Here's a tip or two from the man who made Aardvarks a force in the world...



HOW DO you write an adventure? they asked me. It all starts with an idea. At a later date I'll go through writing an adventure, but for the moment, let me tell you about the adventure we listed in *Big K* 2 to give you an idea.

The original idea for *Adventure X* was a game for a friend of mine, who enjoys playing adventures, but gets frustrated by the more knotty problems. I decided to develop a program whereby he could go on exploring for as long as he liked, but sooner or later couldn't fail to finish the game. More exploration than mental gymnastics, but still providing a lot of the fun.

I wanted to avoid dungeons, dragons and the more 'traditional' scenarios, so the thought of something almost familiar, but not quite, had some interesting possibilities. Exploring an alien city seemed an exciting prospect, full of strange rooms and passages, but littered with familiar everyday objects — Mars Bars, video recorders, digital watches, aardvarks — well, I like aardvarks (and a little aardvark never hurt anyone!)

As the storyline developed, the ideas began to suggest themselves and so did the programming problems. Which is the best way to learn: create the problem, then try and solve it, develop it further and then solve the new problems! Starting as a simple text routine, the program developed more complex situations and responses, better display with graphics and thus into an altogether more colourful game.

I did create some headaches too! Trying to make the events and rooms as random as possible caused problems (at one time almost every room had stairs!), as did giving away as little as possible about how to 'win' the game while you were typing in the listing!

Most of the programming was developed in modules — getting each part in working order

Fig. 1

```
PROGRAM SAVE ROUTINE by Craddock
1 REM ??: REM 2 digits to store line no
9995 LET prog=PEEK 23635+256*PEEK 23636
9996 POKE prog+5,PEEK 23625
9997 POKE prog+6,PEEK 23626
9998 SAVE "PROGRAM" LINE 9999
9999 DEEP .05,0: PRINT "Rewind and Play to verify"
9997 VERIFY "": DEEP .05,0
9998 LET prog=PEEK 23635+256*PEEK 23636
9999 LET line=PEEK (prog+5)+256*PEEK (prog+6)
9999 POKE 23625,30: POKE 23626,2
LIST LINE
```

before going onto the next. This made it much easier to expand and improve the game. Presenting the information and data in order came first — displaying the descriptions etc. — then the basic input routine. This allowed me to test just the 'bare bones' by moving around the city. Then came the responses: trying to think of everything I'd tried while playing adventures and trying to fit in as much as possible. Next came the display routine, presenting the information as clearly as possible and, along with all the scoring routines, making the game look attractive to play. Finally came the introduction, replay option and tidying up.

I found Betasoft's extended BASIC program most helpful while programming, as this includes trace, renumber, auto line number and many other handy routines. Figure 1 shows a useful routine of mine which you can save on tape and merge with new listings you are entering. When saving what you've keyed in so far, enter 'GO TO 9995' as a direct command. This will auto-save the program, and then return, ready to continue. On reloading, it will list the current line number, ready to carry on. POKE 23609,30 provided the popular 'typing beep' and POKE 23562,2 speeds up the cursor movement, making editing of long program lines or data much easier. Line 1 is used to store the current line number and should be just a simple REM statement.

I've improved the game enormously since it saw print, and you may like to try some improvements yourself, though you'll have to check through the listing to see what your changes will affect. Add more descriptions in the data lines. When you've run the program, these can then be deleted to save space, as long as you don't use 'run' or 'clear' again (use GO TO...). Move the intro to the end of the game, and the screen set-up to the beginning. This will speed up the display. And so on and so on. Or you could have a go at writing your own game. Happy adventuring...



I'm in a cave-like room. There are some rickety-looking stairs here. The stairs are down, west. Looking around me I can see Nothing else.

What shall I do now, Paul?
I now have the can of coke.
What do you want to do now?
drink it!


```

1 REM *****
2 REM ***
3 REM *** LUNAR LANDER-64 MK2 ***
4 REM *** BY PAUL SMART ***
5 REM ***
6 REM *** STARTED 23/3/84 ***
7 REM ***
8 REM *** COMPLETED 24/3/84 ***
9 REM ***
10 REM *****
11 REM *****
12 RESTORE
15 POKE53269,0
20 GOTO600
50 F=600:SP=0:SC=0
55 POKE53281,0:POKE53280,0:POKEV+16,1
60 PRINT"CLR":V=53248:POKEV+34,5
70 POKE53269,4:POKE2042,1:POKE53289,6
95 FORN=0TO62:READO:POKEB:2*N,O:NEXT
130 DATA0,0,0,0,0,0,0,24,0,0,60,0,0,60,0
    ,0,126,0,0,126,0,0,255,0,0,189,0
    ,0,126,0,0,126,0,0,255,0,0,255,0,0
    ,0,255,0,0,255,0,0,126,0,0,26,0,0,62,0
    ,0,255,0,0,255,0,0,126,0,0,255,0
132 DATA0,60,0,0,126,0,0,255,0
135 F=600:X=175:Y=70:POKE53252,X:POKE532
53,Y
136 PRINT"(HOME) (CUR DN) (CUR DN) (CUR DN)
(CUR DN) (CUR DN) (CUR DN) (CUR DN) (CUR DN)
(CUR DN) (CUR DN) (CUR DN) (CUR DN) (CUR DN)
DN)
"
137 PRINT"(RVS ON)
"
138 PRINT"(RVS ON) (WP) (WP)
"
139 PRINT"(RVS ON) (N) (M) (WP) (N) (
M) (WP)
"
140 PRINT"(RVS ON) (N) (M) (WP) (N) (
M) (N) (M) (WP) (N) (M)
"

```

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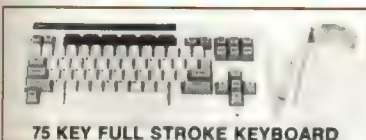
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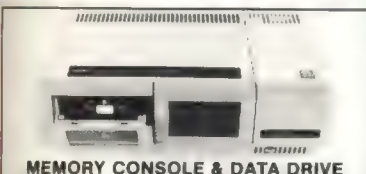
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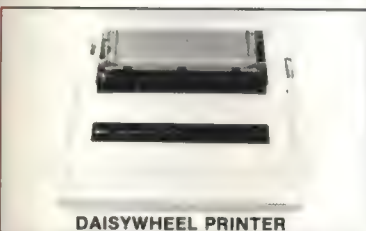
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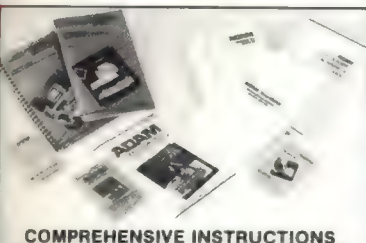
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MEMORY CONSOLE/DATA DRIVE: The heart of the Adam system is the 40K ROM and 84K RAM memory console which combines with the 32K ROM and 16K RAM in Colecovision to give you a total of 72K ROM (including 24K cartridge ROM) and 80K RAM (expandable to 144K). Built into the memory console is a digital data drive which accepts Adam's digital data packs, a fast and reliable mass storage medium that is capable of storing 256K of information, that's about 200 pages of double spaced text! The console is also designed to accommodate a second optional digital data drive.

FULL STROKE KEYBOARD: The Adam keyboard has been designed as a professional quality keyboard that combines ease of use with an impressive array of features. It is stepped and sculptured for maximum efficiency and has 75 full stroke keys which include 6 colour coded Smart Keys which are redefined for each new application, 10 command keys which are dedicated to the word processing function, and 5 cursor control keys for easy positioning of the cursor at any point on the screen. You can attach a Colecovision controller to the keyboard to function as a numeric keypad for easy data entry. It can also be held like a calculator, a feature which makes working with numbers particularly easy. The joystick part of the hand controller can be used in the same way as the cursor control keys, to move the cursor around the screen.

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BUILT-IN WORD PROCESSOR: Adam comes with SmartWriter word processing built-in. This program is so easy to use that you only have to turn the power on and the word processor is on line and ready to go. Detailed instruction books are not necessary as the Computer guides you step by step, working from a series of Menu commands. It enables you to type in text, then completely edit or revise it with the touch of a few keys. Changes are readily made and a series of queries from the computer confirm your intentions, so that you can continuously double check your work as you type.

COMPATIBILITY WITH COLECOVISION: By using high speed interactive microprocessors in each of the modules, the Coleco Adam is designed to take additional advantage of both the 32K ROM and 16K RAM memory capability in the Colecovision. If you do not already own a Colecovision Console (£59 inc VAT), then you will need to purchase this when you initially purchase your Adam Computer package (£499 inc VAT), making a total purchase price of (£598 inc VAT).

WHAT IS COLECOVISION: Colecovision is one of the world's most powerful video game systems, capable of displaying arcade quality colour graphics of incredible quality on a standard Colour TV set. The console (see picture bottom left), accepts 24K ROM cartridges such as Turbo and Zaxxon and is supplied with the popular Donkey Kong cartridge and a pair of joystick controllers. Colecovision has a range of licensed arcade hits available such as Gorf, Carnival, Cosmic Avenger, Mouse Trap, Ladybug, Venture, Smurf, Pepper II, Space Panic, Looping, Space Fury, Mr Do, Time Pilot, Wizard of Wor and many others. So there you have it, Adam plus Colecovision the unbeatable combination. Send the coupon below for your FREE copy of our 12 page Colour brochure giving details on the complete Adam system.

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PLAYER MISSILES

The name conjures up thoughts of alien-zapping hardware but, as NIGEL FARRIER shows, these particular weapons provide a superior form of Sprite movement.

All Atari computers have provision for 4 Players and 4 Missiles. These are 'user defined' graphics characters, which can be moved over the screen display without affecting the 'picture' which is being displayed. Atari player/missiles are a superior implementation of the sprite concept. Player/missiles however, have certain embellishments which are not normally found with Sprites.

Size and Resolution

Player/missile sizes and pixel resolution can be more easily expressed in terms of 'colour clocks' and 'scan lines'. As a point of reference, a single 'pixel' which has been plotted in GR7 will have a resolution of 1 colour clock wide, by 2 scan lines high.

There are 2 options for vertical resolution and the choice should be made according to 'detail' required, and money available.

1) Single Line Resolution: This is the same vertical resolution as in GR8 and requires 2K of RAM to be allocated for storage of P.M. data.

2) Double Line Resolution: This is the same vertical resolution as in GR7 and requires 1K of RAM to be allocated for storage of P.M. data.

The hardware 'shadow register' 'SDMCTL' at 559 (decimal), is used to control the vertical resolution. Poke 559, 62 for single line resolution.

Poke 559, 46 for double line resolution.

Although the vertical resolution selected will apply to all players and missiles, the horizontal resolution of each player or missile can be controlled. Each player has a normal horizontal resolution of 8 separate 'colour clock' sized pixels, whereas missiles are only 2 pixels wide. There are SIZEPO — SIZEP3, located at 53256 — 53259, which can be 'set up' as shown in fig. 1.

Missile sizes are all controlled by one register, called SIZEM, at 53260. Each pair of bits is used to control the size of 1 missile as shown in fig. 2.

Memory Allocation

As previously stated, player/missile graphics require that an area of RAM be allocated for storage of P.M. data. This 'block' of RAM must start on a 1K boundary for double line resolution, or on a 2K boundary for single line resolution. The upper limit of free RAM is defined by the Display list, which varies in location according to the graphics mode in use, so first of all, the location of the Display list should be found by PEEKing the display list 'pointers'.

DUST = PEEK(560) - 256 * PEEK(561).

Obviously the Display list must not be overwritten by the P.M. data, so the 1K or 2K boundary must be selected accordingly. For convenience, table 1 gives the

addresses of the 1K and 2K boundaries which may safely be used on 16K machines. The corresponding page number is also given, and this must be POKED into the PMBASE register at 54279,

which tells the ANTIC 'chip' where to start retrieving the P.M. data.

Note that each 1K 'block' of RAM can be considered to consist of four 256 byte 'pages'.

D7	D6	D5	D4	D3	D2	D1	D0
128	64	32	16	8	4	2	1
SIZEPO — SIZEP3							
NOT USED						0	0
SIZEPO — SIZEP3							
NOT USED						0	1
SIZEPO — SIZEP3							
NOT USED						1	0
SIZEPO — SIZEP3							
NOT USED						1	1

Byte Value

0 = normal width pixel

1 = double width pixel

2 = normal width pixel

3 = quadruple width pixel

Fig. 1: Bit assignments for size registers SIZEPO — SIZEP3. (53256 — 53259)

D7	D6	D5	D4	D3	D2	D1	D0
128	64	32	16	8	4	2	1
SIZEM							
M3		M2		M1		M0	
SIZEM							
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
SIZEM							
0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0

Bit No.

Bit Value

Byte Value

1 = Missile 0 double width, missiles 1-3 normal width.

52 = Missile 1 double width, missile 2 quadruple width, missiles 0 & 3 normal width.

Fig. 2: Bit assignments for size register SIZEM (53260)

Figure 3 shows some 'player' shapes drawn in single line resolution, and in both normal and double width modes for comparison. The cursor square is also shown to the same scale, to give an indication of the actual size of the players.

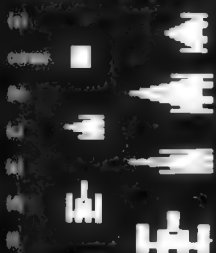


Fig. 3: Some Player Shapes in Single And Double Widths.

Graphics Mode	DLIST address	1K Boundary	Page No.	2K Boundary	Page No.
GR.0	15382	14336	56	12288	48
GR.1	15710	"	"	"	"
GR.2	15872	"	"	"	"
GR.3	15960	"	"	"	"
GR.4	15980	"	"	"	"
GR.5	16210	13312	62	12288	48
GR.6	14210	12288	48	10240	40
GR.7	12194	11264	44	10240	40
GR.8	8272	7188	28	6144	24

Table 1: 1K and 2K boundary addresses.

Figure 4 shows how sections of the P.M. storage area are allocated to each of the players and missiles. You will see that a varying amount of RAM between the P.M. area and the Display list appears to be wasted. This area, together with the RAM allocated to players which are not being used is, however, available for storage of other data, or machine code routines.

The length of the BASIC program must be controlled, to ensure that the player areas are not overwritten by the BASIC code. This would result in some peculiar player shapes being displayed. Remember that GOSUBs and FOR — NEXT loops use the Run — Time Stack, which resides at the end of the BASIC program, and will use additional RAM when the program is RUNNING.

Each player and missile has its own horizontal position register. Horizontal movement can easily be achieved by continuously changing the value in the appropriate reg-

ister. The position registers are HPOSPO — HPOSP3, at 53248 — 53251, for players, and HPOSMD — HPOSM3, at 53252 — 53255, for missiles, and they hold the position of the pixels controlled by the left bit of a player/missile data byte, or pair of bits.

Since the registers can hold a value 0 — 255, this is the range of horizontal movement, with a distance of 1 colour clock between each position. The centre of the screen is at position 127/128.

The normal width of the display area — which we will call the Playfield —, is only 180 colour clocks wide, with a border on each side of about 50 colour clocks. This gives approx. 190 colour clocks as the total width of the T.V. screen, which means that there are about 33 colour

clocks on either side of the screen, where a player/missile shape can be stored out of sight. You may find however, that your T.V. has a slightly narrower, or wider border, so the range of positions where a player/missile shape is visible will have to be found by trial and error.

Vertical movement of players and missiles is more difficult to achieve than horizontal movement. There are no vertical position registers, and therefore, players can only be moved vertically by moving the player data values from one byte to another, within the allotted RAM area. This means that, for smooth vertical movement, a machine code routine which can move data very quickly, is usually required.

Missiles are even more difficult to move vertically if there is more than one being displayed. Because the data for all four missiles is contained in 1 byte, if that data is moved, then all 4 missiles will move. To overcome this problem we must ensure that, when a missile is moved from

one vertical position to another, only the relevant bits at the old position are cleared, and only the relevant bits at the new position are set, leaving the remaining bits unchanged. This process is called masking.

The use of machine code can be avoided by using more advanced programming techniques to assign the P.M. data area to a string, and the P.M. data to a sub string. String 'slicing' can then be used to move the data from one location to another. Listing 1 shows the BASIC code which will 'set up' the strings, and it can be included in your own programs, if there is enough free RAM available. Note that sub strings with different data values can be utilised to make 'instant' changes to the shape of a

player. Listing 2 illustrates this, and if necessary, listings 1 and 2 can be combined.

The range of vertical movement is the same as the number of bytes allocated to each player, i.e. 256 or 128, and since the playfield is only 192 single scan lines high, once again, players can be moved off the screen in either direction.

If you feel that moving player/missile shapes vertically is a bit more difficult than it should be, then you should bear in mind that it is still much easier than trying to poke shapes directly onto the screen.

Player shapes are defined in the same way as normal characters, using 1 byte per line of pixels. But however, whereas normal characters have only 8 lines of pixels, each player, or missile, can have either 256 lines, or 128 lines, depending on the vertical resolution employed. Pixels can be 'lit' on any, or all, of these lines, by setting bits of the relevant P.M. data bytes. Figure 5 shows the corresponding byte values for a typical player shape.

Single Line Resolution

PMBASE + 0	NOT USED			
+ 768	M3	M2	M1	M0
+ 1024	PLAYER 0			
+ 1280	PLAYER 1			
+ 1536	PLAYER 2			
+ 1792	PLAYER 3			
+ 2048	FREE RAM			
VARIES	DISPLAY LIST			
VARIES	SCREEN RAM			

Double Line Resolution

PMBASE + 0	NOT USED			
+ 384	M3	M2	M1	M0
+ 512	PLAYER 0			
+ 640	PLAYER 1			
+ 768	PLAYER 2			
+ 896	PLAYER 3			
+ 1024	FREE RAM			
VARIES	DISPLAY LIST			
VARIES	SCREEN RAM			

Fig. 4: Player/Missile Memory Allocation

Missile shapes only require a pair of bits to define a line of 2 pixels, therefore a single byte contains the data for the corresponding lines of all 4 missiles, as shown in fig. 5.

Continued from previous page

D7	D6	D5	D4	D3	D2	D1	D0	Bit No.
128	64	32	16	8	4	2	1	Bit Value
								Byte Value
0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	31
0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	15
0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	63
1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	206
0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	63
0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	15
0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	3

Fig. 5: Data Values For A Typical Player Shape

D7	D6	D5	D4	D3	D2	D1	D0	Bit No.
128	64	32	16	8	4	2	1	Bit Value

M3	M2	M1	M0	Missile No.
				Byte Value

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3

0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	14
0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	15
0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	16

0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	85
1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	160
0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	85

All missiles defined

Fig. 6: Data Values For Missiles.

Colours

A player/missile shape can be given only one of the 256 Atari colour/brightness values available. Multi coloured shapes can only be achieved by overlapping players or missiles, which each have a different colour, or by using Display List Interrupts to change the colour of complete lines of player/missile pixels.

Each player has its own colour register, COLPM0 - COLPM3, at 53266 - 53269, with 'shadow' registers PCOLRO - PCOLR3, at 704 - 707. Missiles however, take their colour from the corresponding player register.

The value for the required colour is POKed into the relevant shadow register. This is because the Operating System updates all the hardware registers during the Vertical Blank period, using the values which are contained in the shadow registers. You should therefore, always use the shadow registers, except when a register

is to be changed from within a Display List Interrupt routine.

Refers to Table 2 for the values of the various colour/brightness combinations. The lowest values for each colour give zero brightness, i.e. black, and the highest values give maximum brightness, i.e. white.

VALUE	COLOUR
0	GREY
16	GOLD
32	ORANGE
48	RED ORANGE
64	PINK
80	PURPLE BLUE
96	PURPLE BLUE
112	BLUE
128	BLUE
144	LIGHT BLUE
160	TURQUOISE
176	GREEN BLUE
192	GREEN
208	YELLOW GREEN
224	ORANGE GREEN
240	LIGHT ORANGE

LISTING 1

```

19 REM PLAYER MISSILE MOVEMENT USING
STRINGS
20 DIM A$(256):REM NO. OF BYTES PER P
LAYER IN SINGLE LINE RESOLUTION
30 DIM B$(11):REM 9 BYTES FOR SHAPE
SHOWN IN FIG.5 PLUS A TRAILING SPACE TOP
& BOTTOM FOR ERASING
40 X=X+1:READ A:IF A=1 THEN B$(X,X)
=CHR$(A):GOTO 40:REM READ IN THE SHAPE
50 DATA 0,31,2,15,63,206,67,15,2,31,0
,1
60 GRAPHICS 6:REM MUST SET GRAPHICS M
ODE FIRST
70 POKE 54279,40:REM SET PHASE TO S
UIT GR.6 (SEE TABLE 1)
80 POKE 559,62:REM SINGLE LINE RESOLU
TION
84 POKE 53277,0:REM THIS ENABLES PM G
RAPHICS
85 POKE 704,56:REM MAKE PLAYER COLOUR
MID RED
86 FOR N=40+256+1024 TO N+56:POKE N,
0:NEXT N:REM THIS CLEARS PLAYER'S RAM
90 REM FIND START OF VARIABLE VALUE 1
AREA
100 V1AB=PEEK(134)+256*PEEK(135)
110 REM NOW FIND START OF STRING/ARRAY
AREA
120 V1AB=PEEK(140)+256*PEEK(141)
130 REM CALCULATE AND SET FROM START OF
AREA TO START OF PLAYER'S RAM
140 OFFS=40+256+1024-V1AB:REM SEE FIG
.4
150 REM CHANGE THIS TO A 1-BYTE FORMAT
160 HT=INT(OFFS/256):LO=OFFS-HT*256
170 REM NOW INSERT THESE VALUES INTO
RD AND 4TH BYTES OF V1AB
180 REM WHICH HOLD OFFSET FROM START OF
STRING/ARRAY AREA TO START OF A1 DATA
190 POKE V1AB+2,LO:POKE V1AB+3,HT
210 G150:REM VERTICAL POSITION TO STA
RT
220 H200:REM HORIZONTAL POSITION TO S
TART
230 HINC=1:REM HORIZONTAL INCREMENT
240 VINC=1:REM VERTICAL INCREMENT
245 REM TRY CHANGING HINC TO 2 OR
250 POKE 55448,X:REM MOVE PLAYER'S
260 A$(X,11)=REM PUT OUR SHAPE IN
TO THE PLAYER AREA...WITH THE TOP BEING
AT POSITION Y
270 X=X+HINC:Y=Y+VINC:REM SET NEXT HOR
IZ. AND VERT. POSITIONS
280 IF Y=247 OR A=2 THEN HINC=HINC
290 IF Y=247 OR Y=2 THEN VINC=VINC
295 REM SEE IF YOU CAN WORK OUT WHY TH
ESE PARTICULAR LIMITING VALUES WERE SET.
300 GOTO 250

```

LISTING 2

```

1000 REM *****
1010 REM *****
1020 REM *****
1030 REM *****
1040 REM *****
1050 REM *****
1060 REM *****
1070 REM *****
1080 REM *****
1090 REM *****
1100 REM *****
1110 REM *****
1120 REM *****
1130 REM *****
1140 REM *****
1150 REM *****
1160 REM *****
1170 REM *****
1180 REM *****
1190 REM *****
1200 REM *****
1210 REM *****
1220 REM *****
1230 REM *****
1240 REM *****
1250 REM *****
1260 REM *****
1270 REM *****
1280 REM *****
1290 REM *****
1300 REM *****
1310 REM *****
1320 REM *****
1330 REM *****
1340 REM *****
1350 REM *****
1360 REM *****
1370 REM *****
1380 REM *****
1390 REM *****
1400 REM *****
1410 REM *****
1420 REM *****
1430 REM *****
1440 REM *****
1450 REM *****
1460 REM *****
1470 REM *****
1480 REM *****
1490 REM *****
1500 REM *****
1510 REM *****
1520 REM *****
1530 REM *****
1540 REM *****
1550 REM *****
1560 REM *****
1570 REM *****
1580 REM *****
1590 REM *****
1600 REM *****
1610 REM *****
1620 REM *****
1630 REM *****
1640 REM *****
1650 REM *****
1660 REM *****
1670 REM *****
1680 REM *****
1690 REM *****
1700 REM *****
1710 REM *****
1720 REM *****
1730 REM *****
1740 REM *****
1750 REM *****
1760 REM *****
1770 REM *****
1780 REM *****
1790 REM *****
1800 REM *****
1810 REM *****
1820 REM *****
1830 REM *****
1840 REM *****
1850 REM *****
1860 REM *****
1870 REM *****
1880 REM *****
1890 REM *****
1900 REM *****
1910 REM *****
1920 REM *****
1930 REM *****
1940 REM *****
1950 REM *****
1960 REM *****
1970 REM *****
1980 REM *****
1990 REM *****
2000 REM *****

```


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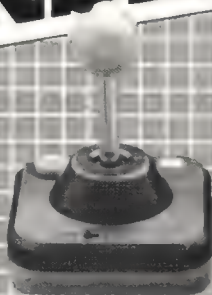
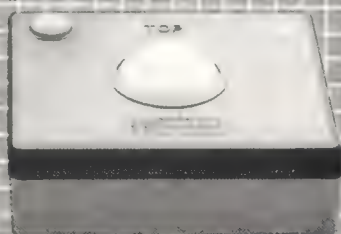
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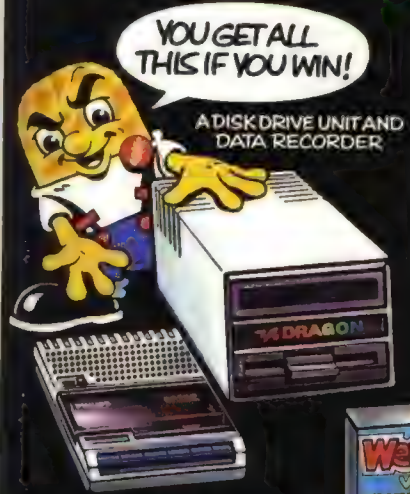
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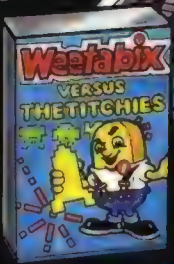


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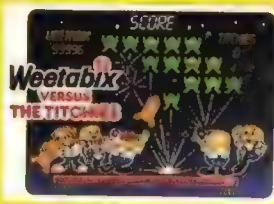


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THE COSMOTRACK
AND THIS IS THE COSMOTRACK



YOU WILL RACE AGAINST



RIGHT FROM the start, I could smell a rat.

The 'Start' is the Cosmodrome, with its tall banks of spectators rising up on either side. Maybe it was the Robofficial, an irksome little satellite droid with one eye that hovered above leaving trails of corny computerese letters. G-E-T READY... It was a six second countdown; I fingered the turbo switch, turned left and right, and pushed the throttle back hard.

The forward surge was, as usual, satisfying. It took us out of the Cosmodrome and into the first stretch of Cosmotrack. Then I saw them. Huge blue cubes floating in the sky as far as the eye could see — which, with the benefit of a tele-screen, is pretty far. They hung like clouds over the Cosmotrack against a

bright yellow sky. A glance down at a planet indicator revealed it to be Cubitania. I knew then that this was the work of an artist.

And it looks like the artist had a field day on this one. I was informed by the Robofficial that the game would take me to 'strange faraway planets: Cubitania, Hexagonia, Crystalia, Stalactia. When you've seen them all: yellow hexagons, mauve pyramids, brown stalactites... it all looks very pretty, if that's your cup of rocket fuel, but I didn't come all the way to outer-space to admire the scenery. Nope, I came to race.

Williams' Star Rider promised enhanced thrills. Quite apart from the quality of the real-time video simulation, I would get to ride a rocket bike. I had never ridden one before and there are

some subtle differences. First thing I had to find in your face due to the Mirrored in Space and also, I suppose, because there's no air in space. Anyway, but when a rocket, you do, however, feel a tiny bit demonic, a feeling enhanced by the handy force field surrounding the Cosmotrack which prevents any spills into the void and lends an invincible and thus somewhat reckless mood to one's ride.

Competing against Thunderbolt ("The Cosmic Champ"), Red Hawk ("Hard to pass"), Sidewinder ("The Snaky One"), and Gold Jet ("The Rookie"), I relied on the old instincts: brake as late as possible, accelerate into the bends, come out with your thumb on the turbo switch, and hang on tight. Pass Gold Jet and Sidewinder on the bends but leave the other two for the straights — they know the tricks. And that Red Hawk is a cool one:

Wonders was a sideways glider, as he came past, despite a rudimentary rear-view telescreen. Old habits die hard, I guess.

I qualified — no problem. Won the first race too, though there was one sticky moment when a cubic cloud strayed onto the Cosmotrack and proved to be not vapour at all but solid as rock. "I think you have The Right Stuff," said the cyclops Robofficial, as I rolled into the cheering Cosmodrome. Thanks.

The next stretch, across Hexagonia, wasn't so easy. I had to race it twice to get the vital first place. "Excellent," said Cyclops-face. "You're bound for the stars." And I was.

So there I was, streaking through the Milky Way, giving that Red Hawk a face full of afterburn, when my interplanetary credits ran out. I came back to Earth with a jolt. Damn that mechanic! He was supposed to have fixed the brakes on my saucer last week...




```

1 REM Dungeon Master's
2 REM Character Sheet
3 REM
4 REM Written By
5 REM Peter R. Fleming
6 REM
7 GO SUB 9000
8 LET CLS=9000
9
10 REM Start
11
12 INK 0: PAPER 7: BORDER 7: F
13 LASH 0: BRIGHT 1: OVER 0: INVERS
14 GO SUB 9050
15 GO SUB CLS
16 PRINT AT 3,6: INVERSE 1: IN
17 K 3: "D.M. Character Sheet"
18 PRINT AT 5,3: "Options -" P
19 LOT 24,127: DRAW 71,0
20 FOR x=1 TO 7: PRINT AT x+2+
21 5,3,0$IX: NEXT x
22 LET a$=INKEY$: IF a$="" OR
23 a$=CHR$ 49 OR a$=CHR$ 55 THEN GO
24 TO 50
25 LET a=CODE a$-48: BEEP .1
26 PRINT AT a+2+5,3: INVERSE 1:
27 GO TO a+500
28
29 REM Variable set-up & SAVE
30 DIM p$(15,13)
31 DIM a(15,7)
32 DIM s$(15,8)
33 DIM r$(15,9)
34 DIM h(15,3)
35 DIM c$(15,3)
36 DIM a$(15,3)
37 DIM s$(15,3)
38 DIM c$(15,3)
39 DIM s$(15,3)
40 DIM c$(15,3)
41 DIM s$(15,3)
42 DIM c$(15,3)
43 DIM s$(15,3)
44 DIM c$(15,3)
45 DIM s$(15,3)
46 DIM c$(15,3)
47 DIM s$(15,3)
48 DIM c$(15,3)
49 DIM s$(15,3)
50 DIM c$(15,3)
51 GO SUB 9050
52 GO SUB 9050
53
54 SAVE "Character" LINE 1
55 PRINT "Verify" VERIFY ""
56 PRINT "Verified O.K."
57 STOP
58 REM List character sheet
59 GO SUB 505
60 PRINT AT 13,2: FLASH 1: "Pre
61 ss key to return to menu." IF I
62 NKEY$="" THEN GO TO 502
63 BEEP .15: GO TO 22
64 GO SUB CLS: PRINT AT 3,3: "N
65 o. Player Character"
66 PLOT 24,143: DRAW 23,0: PLO
67 T 64,143: DRAW 47,0: PLOT 152,14
68 3: DRAW 71,0
69 FOR z=1 TO 15: PRINT OVER 1
70 :AT z+4,3: TAB 8: p$(z): AT z+4,1
71 9: q$(z): NEXT z
72 INPUT "Input character No."
73 :player: IF player=15 OR player
74 =1 THEN GO TO 520
75 CLS
76 GO SUB 9050
77 PRINT AT 3,6: INVERSE 1: IN
78 K 3: "Character sheet No.": player
79 540 PRINT AT 5,3: "Players Name
80 ": p$(player): AT 7,3: "Name": q$
81 (player): AT 9,3: "Race": r$(pla
82 yer)
83 PRINT AT 9,3: "Class": c$(p
84 layer): AT 9,20: "Str": a(player,1
85 ): IF a(player,2)=100 AND a(play
86 er,2)<100 THEN PRINT "/"a(play
87 er,2)
88 IF a(player,2)=100 THEN PRI
89 NT "/"00
90 PRINT AT 10,3: "Sex": s$(
91 player): AT 10,20: "Int": a(player,
92 3): AT 11,20: "Wis": a(player,4)
93 : AT 12,3: "Age": h(player,1): c
94 $(player)
95 PRINT AT 12,20: "Con": a(pla
96 yer,5): AT 13,3: "Height": h(player

```

This superb utility is purpose-built to link computing with the Dungeons & Dragons role-playing mob in what is, for games software, a new way.

A database, in business software, can be compared to a card index divided into 'fields'. Filling out the 'cards' with relevant categories of information is the first step; the database can then be manipulated to keep track of a role-playing session's 'characters'.

The chief user of this computerised record-keeping tool will be the session's Dungeon Master. As players

for SPECTRUM 48K

by Peter Fleming



```

97 20: "Dex": a(player
98 : AT 14,3: "Weight": h(player,
99 3): AT 14,20: "Cha": a(player,
100 3)
101 RETURN
102 REM Adjust character sheet
103 GO SUB CLS: PRINT AT 3,3: "N
104 o. Player Character"
105 PLOT 24,143: DRAW 23,0: PLO
106 T 64,143: DRAW 47,0: PLOT 152,14
107 3: DRAW 71,0
108 FOR z=1 TO 15: PRINT AT z+4
109 : TAB 8: p$(z): AT z+4,19: q$(z)
110 : NEXT z
111 INPUT "Character No.": player
112
113 GO SUB CLS
114 PRINT AT 3,3: "Choose which
115 to adjust"
116 PLOT 24,143: DRAW 163,0
117 FOR z=1 TO 15: PRINT AT z+4
118 : TAB 8: p$(z): NEXT z

```

puting
n what
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'cards'
t step;
ck of a
oping
layers

Although designed for Advanced D&D it can easily be converted for other systems such as T&T. Once the program has been typed in then RUN 200 which will set up all the variables. SAVE "Character" LINE 1 will auto run it on reloading. Use GOTO 1 to restart at any point.

[illegible]

MSX—HOLDING BACK THE MICROS OF THE FUTURE?

BY THE TIME you read this assuming all has gone to plan, the Yen has remained buoyant, and there's been no Third World War — the first consignment of the fabled MSX computers should just about be reaching the shops.

On the other hand, given the habitual delivery dates of the computer business, it's quite on the cards that, as you read this, the first consignment of the fabled MSX computers will be stuck on a freighter somewhere East of Suez. One thing's (more-or-less) for certain: the stuff will be here any day now, so just in case your head's been stuck in a barrel of tar these last few months... here's the very latest word in pre-launch updates.

THE STORY SO FAR

INVENTIVE NIPPONESE electronics conglomerates, distressed at their failure to blag a piece of the world home-computer action on a par with their resources and talents, decide to rationalise said home-computer scene with an entirely logical and (in view of the Duelling Formats situation) necessary move: originate an agreed standard, by which a common system architecture and operating system will allow ANY manufacturer joining the Ring to make and sell hardware, bolt-ons and software all of which will run without glitches on ANY OTHER (rival) machine.

A deal is struck between said Japanese electronics giants and existing American firmware giant Microsoft, to be called MSX. Companies rush to sign up, including JVC, Sony, Mitsubishi (makers of the wartime Zero fighter — there's food for thought), Toshiba, Hitachi, Sanyo and others, including the sole American hardware participant, Spectravideo. All these companies are to make the hardware and software while Microsoft are to design the firmware (the operating system, architecture and BASIC).

THE BAD NEWS

THE BAD news is that the standard chosen is, by any benchmark, an elderly one: the

Z80 CPU (current retail price in the UK: £5.00). Nothing wrong with this product of the Zilog Corp., of course: it powers the Spectrum for starters and no dude wishing to hook up to CP/M (there *are* still some) can do so without a Z80 somewhere in his system (which is why Acorn have produced their Z80 Second Processor for the Beeb). Trouble is, using Z80s means you can address a maximum of 64K of memory. Definitely Last Year's Thing, in view of the advent of the 68000 series of 16/32-bit CPUs which of course can handle simply scads of memory.

THE GOOD NEWS

THE GOOD news is that the Z80 powers Britain's most popular computer ever — said Sinclair Spectrum — and therefore conversion of existing Spectrum progs to the MSX standard is a relatively simple matter: which in turn means that a very great many of the more potent Brit software houses have already declared their faith in the MSX concept, and for the last six months have been converting perennials and writing new stuff to fit it. No doubt it was because of this Z80 dominance that the Japanese decided to use the UK as THE world testbed for the MSX in the first place; the Americans appear dithering about the concept, and besides, the US scene is dominated by the Z80's great rival chip — the 6502 (as seen in Apple, Atari, CBM 64 and others). So whether or not MSX takes over the world will depend to a huge extent on whether it takes over the UK. You have been warned.

WHERE WILL THE AXE FALL?

AS THE MSX machines are all priced around the £200 mark, and boast of 64K of memory, it seems clear that they're aimed at the first-time buyer: folks



any moment now the first MSX all-singing, all-dancing, all-compatible machines will be in your local store. But how badly do we need this "new standard"? And who, if anyone, will benefit?

By TONY TYLER

who would otherwise buy 64s, Enterprises, Electrons and Oric Atmae. Which naturally means that these machines are — theoretically at least — in danger from the new wave.

It's probably true that Commodore stands the best chance of all of weathering this new Pearl Harbor. After all, with all its faults the 64 is THE World Machine, and anybody who already owns one is highly unlikely to ditch it in favour of a new machine with (to them) an unfamiliar processor and only the same memory... unless the other attractions of MSX — the built-in facilities for Peripheral Overkill, video, stereo, music, etc. — tempt them away. As for the other machines... it's hard to say. Acorn's Electron has now established itself, and Oric can probably do without Brit sales altogether, being Big In France. Enterprise? It looks as pretty as any MSX machine, and will expand in as many ways, while its memory possibilities appear to be much higher.

The real potential for MSX appears to lie with those punters who have still not bought any sort of computer at all: for them, the massive inter-compatibility, the sexy looks and the proven record of Nip-Ware generally may well (as the MSX folks hope) clinch any number of over-the-counter deals.

HARDWARE

AT THE time of writing, only one (count it) machine — a Toshiba HX-10 — has been made available to computer magazines for hands-on experience. (THE SAME Toshiba HX-10!) In due course our turn came around; and this is what we found.

The machine is low, flat and pretty, about the proportions of the Beeb in all dimensions save front-to-back. It has a full-stroke keyboard with slightly rattly keys (all those journalists thumping away are probably bad news in the wear-and-tear departments). Several things stand out: the sensible arrangement of arrow keys; the use of colour-coding; the five (shiftable) function keys; and the i/o ports for video and stereo, clear signs of bolt-ons and interfaces to come; and

the large ROM port on the top right of the machine.

No manual accompanied our (everybody's) Toshiba, so we had to grope our way around a bit. Power-up produces the Microsoft MSX logo, followed by a pale blue Atari/CBM type screen, with keyword labels (produced by the function keys) along the bottom of the screen. Typing in is fast and easy — and, despite the rattly keys, precise and pleasant. The BASIC is recognisably Microsoft, extremely user-friendly, and the editor is slick and fast (Atari-style). Arrow keys move the cursor around the screen very quickly without the use of Control.

There are 16 colours, defined by the COLOR statement; sprites of potentially huge size, defined by the SPRITE statement; and four screen modes: two text, one hi-res (256 x 192), and one multi-colour mode where all 16 colours can be put on the screen at one time on a 64 x 48 grid. The 32 possible sprites are stored in the 32K of ROM.

All this makes the reviewed machine (at least) very Commodore-like in spec., and considerably better in looks and in the not insignificant matter of the BASIC.

SOFTWARE

REPORTS RECEIVED from the Land of the Rising Yen indicate that, in the matter of games so far produced for the MSX machines (on ROM and cassette), the Japanese have come up with their usual set of beautifully-coded clunkers: blood and thunder, childish and deeply unsatisfactory. "They're terrible," Quick-silver's Mark Eyles recently told BIG K, "but what we and other British software companies are doing with the machines will change all that." QS of course are deeply committed to supporting MSX (they've had an early machine for six months now), as are Thorn-EMI (Creative Sparks), Virgin, Ocean, Kuma, Artic, CDS, Bug-Byte, and Silversoft. With others to follow, no doubt, Kuma already have a utility out, and other houses are variously planning release of their first titles just before Christmas.



CONCLUSIONS

THE CYNICAL view is that while compatibility is a summation devoutly to be wished, the Z80/64K standard is a heavy case of too-little-too-late (an MSX II based on the 68000 and 128K would be something else again). Also, the sexy packaging and the price all combine to make the MSX machines a first-user's choice. So it seems certain that anybody who, at the time of writing, doesn't yet own a computer but wishes they did, may well go in for it in an increasingly big way (this represents a consensus of views in the industry as well). However the MSX standard holds little of excitement for those of you (most of you) who already own a machine. Besides, there's the viewpoint that by fossilising operating system standards around an elderly if useful chip and an upper memory limit of 64K, the MSX people are actually holding back the pace of innovation. Then again, it could be said that the pace of innovation is so fast, and obsolescence such a built-in factor for ANY new computer, that for the sake of the poor punter (who has to pay for it all at the end of the day), it's just as well that somebody has at last taken a stand.

This time next year we'll know all the answers... and by then, no doubt, we'll be starting to hear about MSX II — and the whole business will be starting up all over again.

WHAT WOULD YOUR MSX6 SPEC. BE?

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64K? 128K? Or perhaps 256K (to take advantage of the new generation of chips)?

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The best ideas will get printed, and their originators will get a lucky dip from the BIG K MYSTERY SOFTWARE HOARD. So be sure to include details of any computer(s) you own

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Level 9 Adventures are superbly designed and programmed, the contents first rate.

YOUR 64 June 84

✓ Whichever machine you own, if you have the vaguest tendency towards adventure playing then you must try one of these games (unfortunately you'll probably end up wanting to buy the lot!).

Computing Today, August 84

✓ To me, all Level 9 adventures create a remarkable atmosphere because the descriptions sound so life-like. This is where so many other adventures fail.

Crash, July 84

✓ But it's not just the size of the game it's the quality as well that is astonishing ... scenes to fire the imagination.

PCG, April 84

✓ As in all Level 9's adventures, the real pleasure comes not from scoring points but in exploring the world in which the game is set and learning about its denizens.

Which Micro?, February 84

✓ I thoroughly recommend these Adventures, they are excellent value for money. No self-respecting Adventure-addict should be without them. I believe Level 9 are producing a series of Adventures which should be regarded as classics.

Atari User, July 84

✓ These programs run very fast and there are no frustrating pauses. Level 9 Adventures are superbly designed and programmed, the contents first rate. The implementation of Colossal Adventure is nothing short of brilliance; rush out and buy it. While you're at it, buy their others too. Simply smashing!

Your 64, June 84

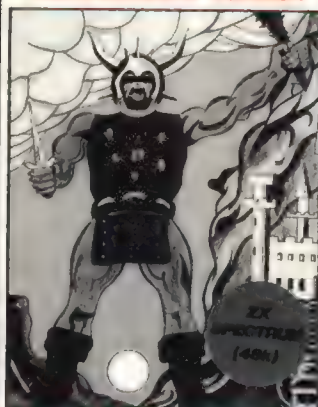
✓ Level 9 - arguably the producer of the best adventure games in the UK - has done it again. LORDS OF TIME is a sparkling addition to its stable of winners.

Acom User, July 84

✓ (SNOWBALL). This is another imaginative, massive-scaled immensely enjoyable adventure from those experts down at Level 9 Computing.

Your Computer, March 84

Adventure Quest



Level 9 Computing

Adventure Quest is the second in Level 9's acclaimed Middle Earth trilogy, though it can be played by itself.

Available from WH Smith and good computer shops everywhere. If your local dealer doesn't stock Level 9 adventures yet, get him to contact us or: Centresoft, Microdealer UK, Ferranti & Craig, Leisuresoft, Lime Tree, LVL, PCS, R & R or Wonderbridge.

his
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PRESENTS...

Once in a while, a computer game arrives at the BIG K offices that is so splendid, formidable and exquisitely designed that we sink to our knees in awe before dashing off to pen a rave review. Then there's the other kind...

Connoisseurs of the Infinite: STEVE KEATON, RICHARD BURTON, NICKY XIKLUNA, KIM ALDIS and TONY TYLER

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FROGGER (ANYBODY'S)

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FROGGER



Under License from Sega Enterprises Inc.

Completely loathsome game in which frogs are squashed on roads and then — unaccountably — drowned in rivers. Eye-stretching if not exactly mind-bending, what with horizontal bars of color moving in opposite directions like a zebra on acid.

Have you noticed how it's only the most obnoxious 9-year-olds who are any good at Frogger? As it happens, I'm rather keen on pondlife and the sight of a squashed frog on my local main drag fills me with horror and angst. As it should you. Consign this amphibian to oblivion. — T.T.

BUCK ROGERS & THE PLANET OF ZOOM

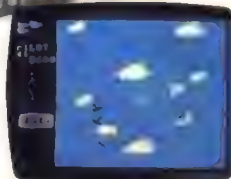
(CBS-COLECO)

Sure, the guy's a vintage space hero — second cousin to the great Flash (Gordon), but after a stab at this as far as I'm concerned Buck is a four-letter word. A lame French remake with a decent bit and a space bit in the middle. BR and the Planer of Z acquired badly — as the debut it was — for Coleco's new Adam computer. Although I know it wasn't written in BASIC, COULD have been written (that and as far as I'm concerned) would probably have been better if it HAD been written in BASIC. Apart from which it takes a whole tea-break to load. Where's the game in that? — T.T.



TIME PILOT

(CBS-COLECO)



Remember the vintage arcade game (can't remember who by) where two biplanes wheeled and soared in the dawn Flanders sky (it says here), potting each other? An easy seven years ago, wasn't it? Atari used it as the basis for the Combat freebie you once got with a VCS; now here it is again. What was ace seven years ago has mellowed with age. Wheel and soar, yawn and bore, nod out, drift away and dream of pink sugar houses. Almost fit for the Adam. — T.T.

JUMBO JET PILOT (THORN-EMI)

Most farcical flight sim in the western hemisphere, this early and vintage turkey from the (then) Thorn group provided absolutely zilch inside the best packaging ever seen. Apart from the control panel — which, though digital, was functional — the thing is so unrealistic as to be laughable. Start takeoff and EIGHT MINUTES LATER you reach the apparently necessary takeoff speed of, wait for it, 270 mph. Translating this into real terms, by my reckoning, and starting at runway 3 of Heathrow, you'd be at the infamous Talgarth Road traffic jam before wheels-up. Tough on the commuters! After this promising start, you then find that virtually any control sends you into the deck. Tough on the passengers! Tough on the purchasers, too. — T.T.

JUMBO JET PILOT



Instructions for use

TRENCH (VIRGIN)

Marvellously inept Star Wars rip-off that's not only uninteresting but totally unplayable. As the last hope of the Rebel Alliance you must fly your trusty X-Wing BBC 'B' across the surface of the Empire's Death Star in the vain hope of dropping a big one down some convenient exhaust port. Unfortunately as you're cursed with only one life (or X-Wing), no appreciable weaponry and a generally unmanageable craft (a joystick only makes things worse!) success is more than elusive. Something of an SF snoots-em-up I'd say. — S.K.

TRENCH



CATCHA SNATCHA (IMAGINE)

For early 1980s video games, this is a masterpiece. The game is a simple one, but it is played with a joystick and a button. The game is played on a screen that is divided into four quadrants. In each quadrant, there is a different type of enemy. The player's job is to catch the enemies and bring them back to the base. The game is played on a screen that is divided into four quadrants. In each quadrant, there is a different type of enemy. The player's job is to catch the enemies and bring them back to the base. The game is played on a screen that is divided into four quadrants. In each quadrant, there is a different type of enemy. The player's job is to catch the enemies and bring them back to the base.

catcha snatcha



PI-EYED (AUTOMATA)

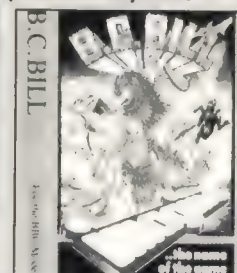
You know Automata, those wonderful wacky people who are trying to stamp out violence in computer games and produce only good wholesome family games. Well, here's a 'wholesome' little product for your Spectrum:

First you've got to run Pi-Man through heavy traffic and into as many pubs as possible. He then cannot leave a pub before he has drunk every pint in the bar. Points are deducted for jogging other drinkers, slipping in beer slops, tripping over dogs or treading in 'certain substances' that are graphically depicted on the pub floor.

Once every drop (of ale) is sipped its back out into the traffic for more fun and mayhem. — R.U.



B.C. BILL (IMAGINE) BBC



You thought the other games were in bad taste, but wait till you see the bile green screen and pimple-puce graphics of *BC Bill* coming at you. This game is utterly and stunningly... mediocre.

B.C. possesses a single, erudite, social skill — the ability to bash women over the head with his club, and drag them off home by the hair. He must then carry on clubbing, in an effort to feed his wives and increasing number of sprogs. But before any macho types 'go ape' with this sudden license to unfettered chest thump — take this, you brutes. The game's about as exciting as a daily sojourn from Esher in a bid to meet the Mothercare tab for a family of four. — N.T.

VALHALLA

(LEGEND)



This highly hyped, over-rated, over-priced turkey is clearly a classic example of the Emperor's new clothes. Despite being hugely uninteresting and AGONISINGLY SLOW to play it's managed to gross over 2 million pounds! It's enough to make you weep.

We're told it's a 'computer movie'. That characters do pretty much what they like. What we're not told is that the graphics are so poor these figures are nigh on unrecognisable. They just shuffle back and forth across the screen like minuscule roaches. The guests are equally naff, being both pointless and boring. What on earth (or in Asgard) is the attraction? Game of the year? Pshaw! If you ask me it should be placed in a chest and left in Hell. — S.K.

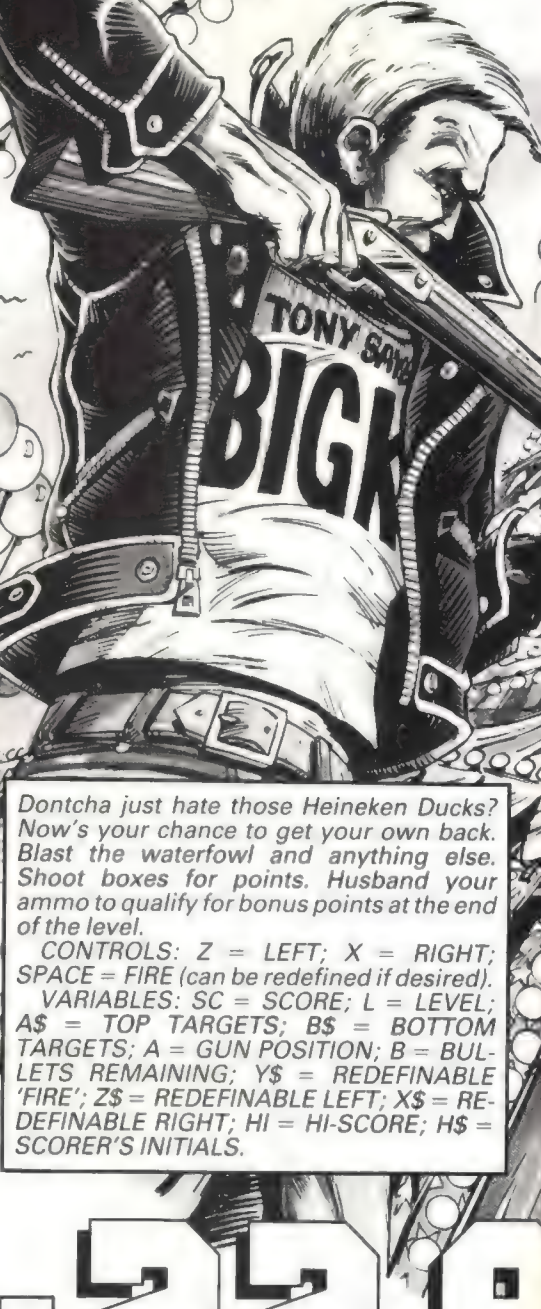
NOTE TO READERS

What are YOUR nominations for Lame Games? Send 'em in to: BIK K, IPC Magazines, Kings Rech Tower (2035), Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS. We'll pay a fiver for the most candid submissions, and print 'em, too!

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If we missed you out. It's just that we didn't have enough room. So if you're feeling rejected, send in your back-catalogue clunkers — or your rivals' (stir, stir) — and we'll try and get them in a reprise feature a some Future Point In Time.



FOR SPECTRUM 48K

Dontcha just hate those Heineken Ducks? Now's your chance to get your own back. Blast the waterfowl and anything else. Shoot boxes for points. Husband your ammo to qualify for bonus points at the end of the level.

CONTROLS: Z = LEFT; X = RIGHT; SPACE = FIRE (can be redefined if desired).

VARIABLES: SC = SCORE; L = LEVEL; A\$ = TOP TARGETS; B\$ = BOTTOM TARGETS; A = GUN POSITION; B = BULLETS REMAINING; Y\$ = REDEFINABLE 'FIRE'; Z\$ = REDEFINABLE LEFT; X\$ = REDEFINABLE RIGHT; HI = HI-SCORE; H\$ = SCORER'S INITIALS.

-22 R

84

For SPECTRUM 48 B

CONTROLS: Z = LEFT; X = RIGHT;
SPACE = FIRE (can be redefined if desired).
VARIABLES: SC = SCORE; L = LEVEL;
A\$ = TOP TARGETS; B\$ = BOTTOM
TARGETS; A = GUN POSITION; B = BUL-
LETS REMAINING; Y\$ = REDEFINABLE
'FIRE'; Z\$ = REDEFINABLE LEFT; X\$ = RE-
DEFINABLE RIGHT; HI = HI-SCORE; H\$ =
SCORER'S INITIALS.

VARIABLES: SC = SCORE; L = LEVEL; AS = TOP TARGETS; BS = BOTTOM TARGETS; A = GUN POSITION; B = BULLETS REMAINING; YS = REDEFINABLE 'FIRE'; ZS = REDEFINABLE LEFT; XS = REDEFINABLE RIGHT; HI = HI-SCORE; HS = SCORER'S INITIALS.

22 A

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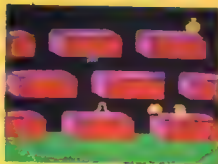
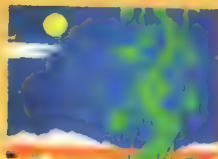
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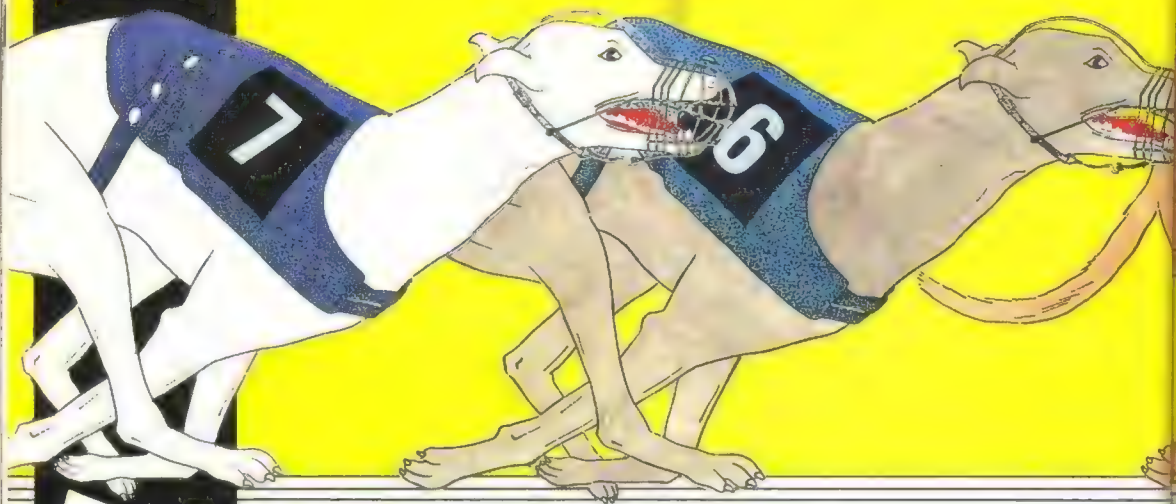
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DOG

```
100 REM *****
```

```
200 REM *      DOG RACING      *
```

```
300 REM *      BY S.L.F. FIELDING      *
```

```
400 REM *      DRID 1 VERSION      *
```

```
500 REM *      DATE:17/03/1984      *
```

```
600 REM *ADAPTED FROM CBOZ VERSION*
```

```
700 REM *WRITTEN BY SHAUN FIELDING*
```

```
800 REM *(c) S.FIELDING 1981,1984*
```

```
900 REM *****
```

```
110 REM
```

```
120 REM ***INITIO PART 1***
```

```
1000 CLS:PAPER0:IN#1:PRINTCHR$(17)
```

```
1010 FOR X=470641047080
```

```
1020 READ Y
```

```
1030 POKE X,Y
```

```
1040 NEXT X
```

```
1050 DATA 0,0,0,16,16,31,31,24,0,0,8,15,  
15,56,56,24
```

```
1100 PRINTCHR$(4);CHR$(27);"N DOG RACING  
BY S.L.F. FIELDING 1984":PRINT
```

```
CHR$(4)
```

```
1105 READ V
```

```
1110 IF V=1 THEN GOTO 1199
```

```
1115 MUSIC 1,3,9,9
```

```
1120 GOTO 1105
```

```
1125 DATA 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,  
3,2,1,4,5,6,7,8,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1
```

```
1130 DATA 2,3,4,5,6,7,7,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,  
1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1,1
```

```
1199 PLAY 0,0,0,0
```

```
1200 PRINT:PRINT :PRINTCHR$(4);CHR$(27)  
;"J Would you like instructions":PRINTCHR$(4)
```

```
1300 INPUT J4
```

```
1400 IF LEFT$(J$,1)="#" THEN GOSUB 15900
```

```
1450 REM ***LIST BETTING***
```

```
1500 CLS:PAPER0:IN#6
```

```
1600 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT  
:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT
```

```
1700 PRINTCHR$(4);CHR$(27);"N BETTING W1  
11 FOLLOW 1":PRINTCHR$(4)
```

```
1800 WAIT 150
```

```
1900 CLS:PAPER0:IN#4
```

```
2000 PRINT"      BETTING":PRINT"
```

```
2100 PRINT
```

```
2200 FOR AA=1 TO 6
```

```
2400 LET A(AA)=INT(RND(1)*050+1)
```

```
2500 PRINT"      TRAP:":AA;"....."A(AA)  
;"71"
```

```
2600 PRINT
```

```
2720 MUSIC 1,4,AA,8
```

```
2640 WAIT 100
```

```
2700 MUSIC 1,4,AA+1,8
```

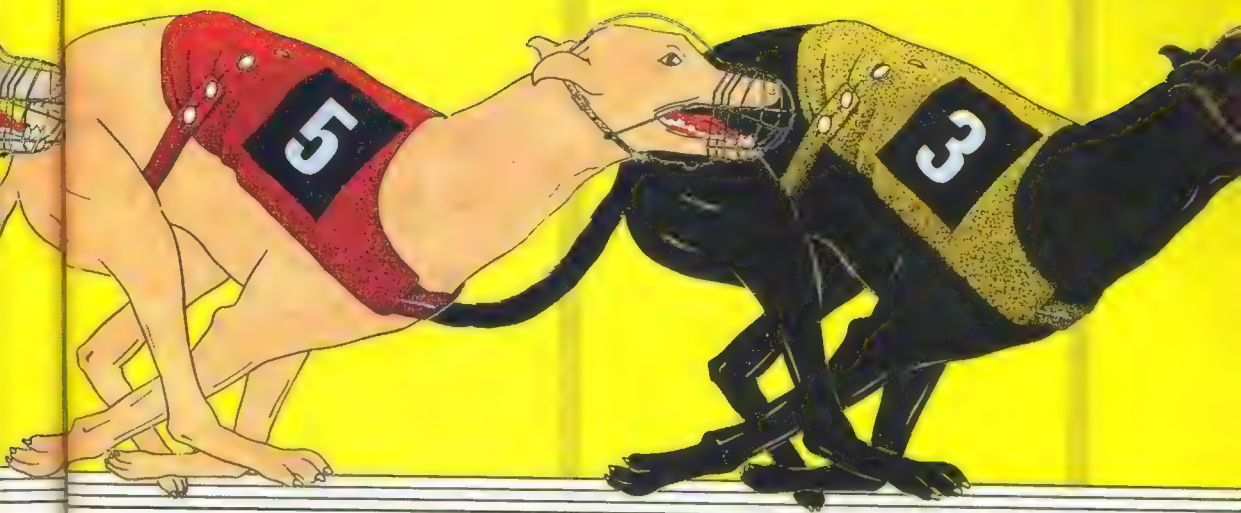
```
2800 NEXT AA
```

```
2900 PLAY 0,0,0,0
```

```
2950 REM ***TAKE BET AND MONEY***
```

```
3000 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT
```

```
3100 INPUT"WHICH DOG "I4
```



```

3200 IF E=1 OR E=6 THEN 3100
3400 PRINT:PRINT
3500 INPUT "HOW MUCH DO YOU BET ";D
3550 REM *** SET UP SCREEN FOR RACE***
3600 CLS:PAPER 0
3650 LORES 0
3700 INKEY$=PLOT 0,0,"          DOG RACE
IND"
4700 FOR C=0 TO 30: PLOT C,2,10: NEXT
4800 FOR C=0 TO 30: PLOT C,22,19: NEXT
4900 PLOT 3,1,"S":PLOT 36,1,"F"
5000 FOR C=31 TO 21: PLOT 36,C,"1": NEXT
5005 E=4
5010 FOR X=1 TO 6
5020 PLOT 1,1,X
5030 E=E+1
5040 NEXT X
5050 FOR X=41 TO 19: STEP 2
5100 PLOT 5,X,"0"
5200 NEXT X
5250 FOR C=31 TO 1: PLOT 2,C,"1": NEXT
5300 PLOT 10,12,"THEY'RE UNDER ORDERS"
5400 AB=3: AC=3: AD=3: AE=3: AF=3: AG=3
5500 WAIT 200
5600 MUSIC 1,4,6,9: WAIT 100
5605 MUSIC 1,4,4,9: WAIT 100
5610 MUSIC 1,4,8,9: WAIT 25
5620 MUSIC 1,4,6,9: WAIT 100

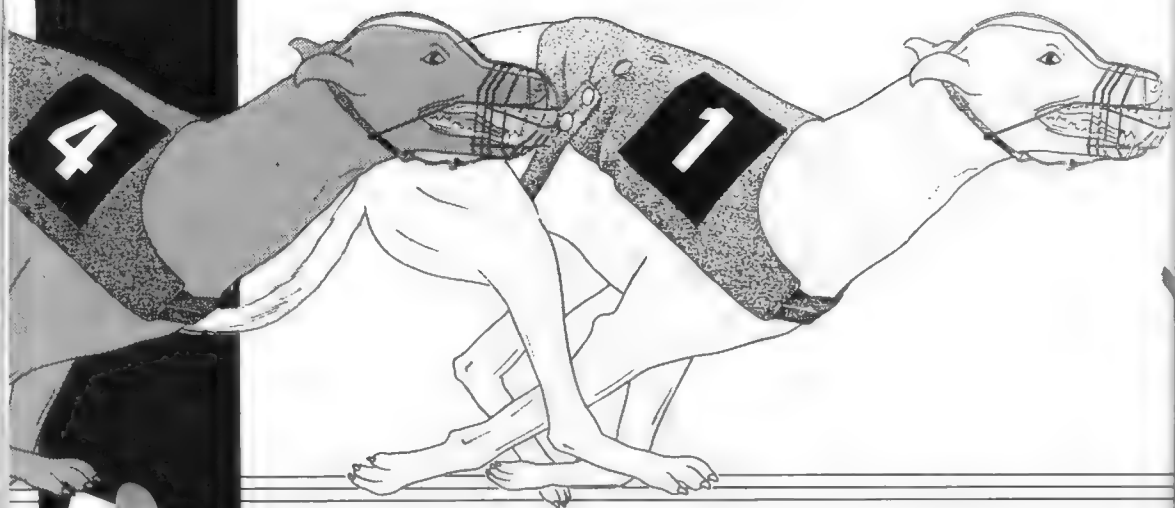
```

```

5630 PLAY 0,0,0,0
5700 PLOT 10,12,"  THEY'RE OFF  "
5800 FOR C=1 TO 19: PRINT: NEXT
5900 WAIT 250
6000 PLOT 10,12,"          "
6500 REM *** RACE ROUTINE ***
7000 FOR Z=1 TO 2
7100 LET G(Z)=INT(RND(1)*6+1)
7200 IF B(2)=G(1) THEN 7100
7300 ON G(Z) GOTO 7400,8000,8600,9200,9800,10400
7400 PLOT AB,4,32
7500 LET AB=AB+1
7600 PLOT AB,4,"1"
7700 IF AB=37 THEN 11000
7800 WAIT 10
7900 GOTO 7100
8000 PLOT AC,7,32
8100 LET AC=AC+1
8200 PLOT AC,7,"1"
8300 IF AC=37 THEN 11000

```

CONTINUED **NEXT PAGE**

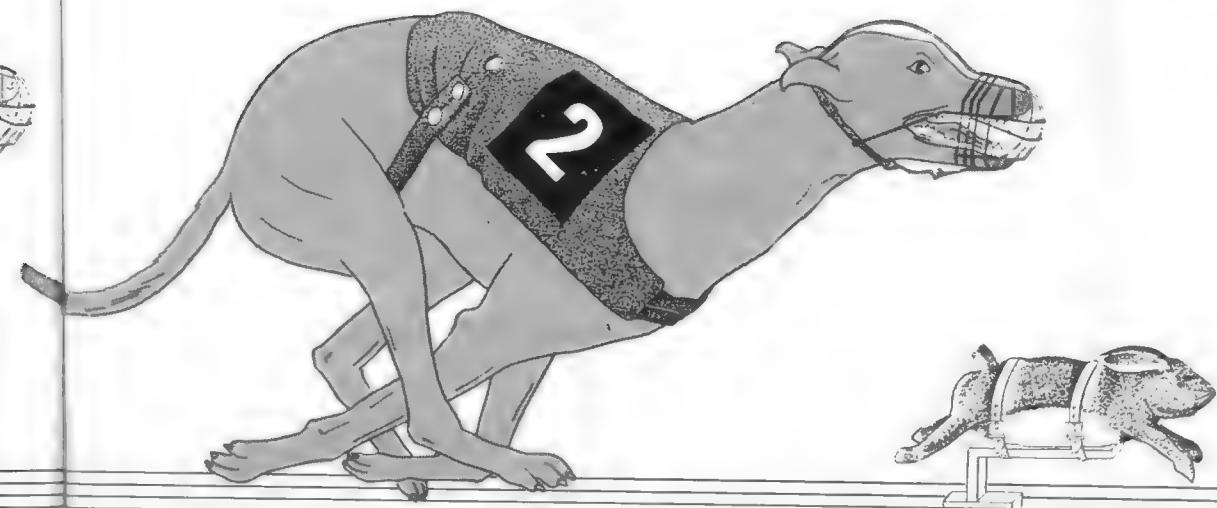


```

8400 WAIT10
8500 GOTO 7100
8600 PLOT AD,10,32
8700 LET AD=AD+1
8800 PLOT AD,10,"(1"
8900 IF AD=37 THEN 11000
9000 WAIT10
9100 GOTO 7100
9200 PLOT AE,13,32
9300 LET AE=AE+1
9400 PLOT AE,13,"(1"
9500 IF AE=37 THEN 11000
9600 WAIT10
9700 GOTO 7100
9800 PLOT AF,16,32
9900 LET AF=AF+1
10000 PLOT AF,16,"(1"
10100 IF AF=37 THEN 11000
10150 WAIT10
10200 GOTO 7100
10400 PLOT AG,19,32
10500 LET AG=AG+1
10600 PLOT AG,19,"(1"
10700 IF AG=37 THEN 11000
10750 WAIT10
10800 GOTO 7100

11000 NEXT Z
11050 REM +++END OF RACE,LIST S.F.,+++
11100 WAIT 300:CLS
11200 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT
11300 PRINTCHR$(4);CHR$(27);"J IN A MOMEN
    T THE S.P.":PRINTCHR$(4)
11400 WAIT 500:CLS:PAPER0:INI 1
11500 T=INT(RND(1)*10+1)
11600 W=INT(RND(1)*60+1)
11650 PRINT
11700 PRINTCHR$(4);CHR$(27);"J DRIC RACI
    NG":PRINTCHR$(4)
11800 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT
11900 PRINT:PRINT
12500 PRINT"1st  TRAP ";G(1);" ";A(G(1))
    ;"/1"
12600 PRINT:PRINT
12700 PRINT"2nd  TRAP ";G(2);" ";A(G(2))
    ;"/1"
12900 WAIT 400
13000 CLS:PAPER0:INI 5
13050 REM ++HAVE YOU WON ?+++
13100 IF E=G(1) THEN GOTO 13300 ELSE 13200
13200 IF E=G(2) THEN GOTO 13950 ELSE GOTO 14400
13300 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT
    G:PRINT

```



13400 PRINTCHR\$(4);CHR\$(27);"N
*****":PRINTCHR\$(4)

```
13420 PRINTCHR$(4);CHR$(27);"N           YOU  
HAVE COME FIRST!";PRINTCHR$(4)
```

```
13440 PRINTCHR$(4);CHR$(27);"N
#####";PRINTCHR$(4)
```

$$13/00 \text{ LET } A(n) = (n+1) \cdot n!$$

```
13800 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT"YOU HAVE WON  ";
```

100 GB (14800)

17950 PAPER 6: IN 4

```
14000 CL5:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:
PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PR
```

NT"YOU HAVE C'LINE SECOND")

$$14700 \text{ At} = A(G(2)) \times D/2$$

14300 PRINT:PRINT"YOU HAVE WON " ; A;

14400 GUYD 14800

14490 FLS; IN 3; PAPER 0

```
14500 CLS:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:
      PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT:PRINT
```

NI"YOU HAVE LOST (SORRY +)))")

1400 WAI 400

14850 REM ***** ANOTHER GO ****

14700 CLS:PAPER0:INF 2

14950 PRIN1

```
15000 PRINTCHR$(4);CHR$(27);"J WOULD YOU  
LIKE ANOTHER RACE?";PRINT
```

附件(4)

13050 RESTORE

15100 INFANT L\$

15.00 IF L\$="YES" OR L\$="Y" THEN 1900



RICHARD TAYLOR'S PAGE



The six million viewpoint Graphics routine

RICHARD TAYLOR delves into the innermost depths of the Z80 chip and delivers a stunning rotatable 3D wire-frame package. For 48K Spectrum owners only.

THIS MONTH'S program, in stark contrast to the last three months, has nothing to do with 2D animation. Instead the program works in 3 dimensions and is called a 3D Rotator.

Basically it allows you to design a 3D object on paper; tap a few numbers into the old Spectrum and end up with a computer representation of the object on the TV screen — rather like user definable graphics but in three dimensions. Well, you might think, that's all very clever but what's the point of the whole exercise? The point is that at the touch of a key you can rotate the object around on the TV screen and look at it from another angle. Not only does this give a very nice demo of micro-graphics but also such animation can be very useful for integrating into home-brewed games. The program's been designed so that it's easy to put in your own programs and is able to draw a 'wire frame' representation of any object bounded by straight lines.

The rotator is written in 100% machine code but even so, because of the sheer complexity of the mathematical formulas used to work out exactly what an object looks like from numerous different positions, the program isn't instant. I've used all the speeding up techniques I can think of in writing the program to make it run as quickly as possible. The result is that the program is fast enough to make a turning object look as if it is really rotating, rather than just 'jumping' from one position to the next.

The amount of time the Spectrum takes to draw the object really depends on how

complicated it is i.e. how many lines it is composed of. Now, before I continue, I feel I should warn all 16K owners that this program is for its larger memory sized brother only. Hard luck.

The machine code is a bit on the lengthy side — it runs to about 1.25K. The machine code loader is shown in listing one. All (I) you have to do is tap it in, RUN it and wait for a couple of minutes. You should then be greeted with a message advising you to SAVE the machine code to tape a couple of times using:—

SAVE "3D ROTATER" CODE
58084,1308

If you're unfortunate enough to get a message informing you about an error in one of the DATA lines then I'm afraid that you'll have to correct it and try again.

So as not to compound your finger ache with another gigantic listing, the BASIC program which gives you the facility to actually enter the data for your own objects will not be published until next month. However, the actual rotating bit is complete so, meanwhile, to act as a demonstration of its capabilities, there's listing 2. This program sets up the data for a simple representation of an aeroplane which you can rotate about and so generally get the feel of the rotation functions. After typing it in and running it, you'll have to set your tape recorder to the start of the machine code recording. After that's loaded you'll be presented with a front, horizontal view of the plane.

You'll no doubt be aware of how points in 2D space are represented using x and y co-

ordinates. Well, 3D co-ordinates are just as simple, the only difference being that you have to tag a z co-ordinate on the end of the other two. The third axis is at right angles to the first two i.e. if you draw x and y axis on a piece of paper then the z axis would pass through the paper. In this program, positive z values go into the page and negative ones out of the page. Listing 2 allows you to rotate the plane around the x, y and z axis using, not surprisingly, the x, y and z keys. Pressing caps-shift and one of the rotation keys (i.e. the capital of the letter) results in negative rotation in the appropriate axis. Notice how all rotation takes place about the point of origin, where all the axes intersect. The program itself is able to rotate an object with a resolution of just 2 degrees. Therefore, in each axis, you can view the plane from some 180 different views. In total there are 5,832,000 (180³) possible aspects on each designed object!

It's all very well having a resolution of 2 degrees, but if you want to turn an object over quickly then it would take ages because of the number of times the object has to be re-drawn in its journey. To remedy this, you can change how many (multiples of 2) degrees the object rotates each time you press a rotation key — by just pressing the appropriate digit key. the program will go into a demonstration mode if you press 'd', where the plane is automatically rotated around by the computer. Demo mode can be terminated with key 'e'. Again, the speed of rotation can be varied with the digit keys.

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Addictive Games	70	Microdeal	Cover 4
AGF	57	Micromania.....	18
Alligata	81	Micro Workshop	70
Anirot	79	MLS	43
Automata	13	Mr. Micro.....	105
Beau-Jolly	111	Nat West.....	21
Blue Chip	19	Nebulae.....	99
Cascade.....	45	PGSL	70
CGL.....	112	Phoenix	110
Channel 8	107	Ram Electronics	26
Cheetah.....	106	Ramjam Co.....	98
Commodore.....	32, 33	R&R	55
Consumer Electronics	7	Silica Shop	65
Creative Sparks.....	78	Software Index.....	44
Currah	10	Software Projects	96, 97
Discount Computer	62	Solar Software	63
Domark.....	45, 47	Stack.....	86
Dream Software.....	47, 49	System 3.....	64
Elite	Cover 2	Talent	103
Euromax.....	78	Tandy	23
Front Runner (K-TEL)	49	Thor	87
4th Dimension.....	58	Ultimate	8
Gargoyle	94	Vic Oddens	38
Hutchinson (Lone Wolf).....	28, 29	Video Offer (Chris Tarrant)	86
Hutchinson (Computer Wimp).....	44	Weetabix.....	71
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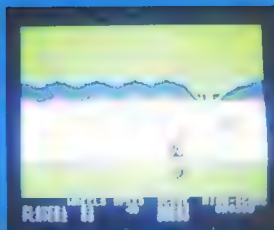
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It's that's the way to win. It's that's the way to win. It's that's the way to win. It's that's the way to win. It's that's the way to win. It's that's the way to win. It's that's the way to win. It's that's the way to win.

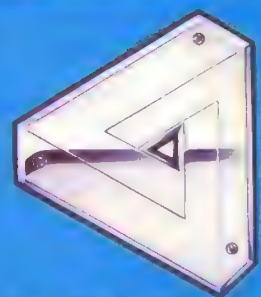
This is the way to win. This is the way to win. This is the way to win. This is the way to win. This is the way to win. This is the way to win. This is the way to win. This is the way to win.

Click over the river. That's the way to win. That's the way to win. That's the way to win. That's the way to win. That's the way to win. That's the way to win. That's the way to win. That's the way to win.

Click again. That's the way to win. That's the way to win. That's the way to win. That's the way to win. That's the way to win. That's the way to win. That's the way to win. That's the way to win.

If that's the way to win. If that's the way to win. If that's the way to win. If that's the way to win. If that's the way to win. If that's the way to win. If that's the way to win. If that's the way to win.

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Sounds incredible? So was the real thing . . .

[illegible]

A photograph of a tilted, rectangular piece of paper, possibly a document or a piece of evidence. The paper is light-colored and has some faint, illegible markings or text on it. The background is dark and textured, suggesting it might be a surface like a table or a wall. The paper is slightly wrinkled and has some shadows on it.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
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[illegible]

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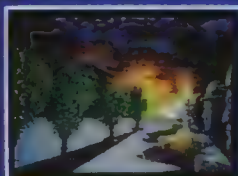
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our electronic eyrie high in the cloud-wreathed fastness of the Tower of Power, each of whom bears on his head a rattan basket containing readers' progs.

Evaluating this material takes time, and time is one thing we never seem to have enough of . . .

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NEXT MONTH IN BIG K...

THE INS AND OUTS OF STRONTIUM DOG

Bringing any established comic character to computerised life is no mean undertaking. Bringing 2000 AD's futuristic sinister bounty hunter STRONTIUM DOG to life is perilous indeed. We chart the anatomy of a new biggie . . .

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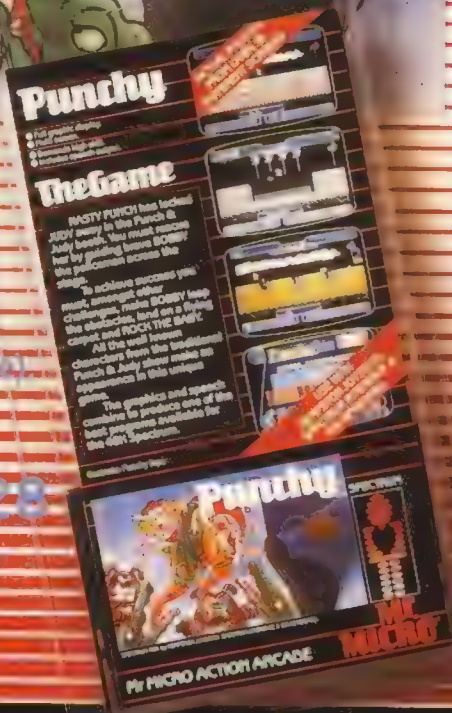
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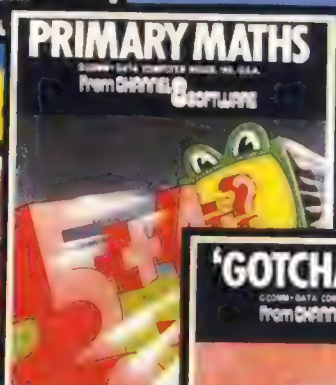
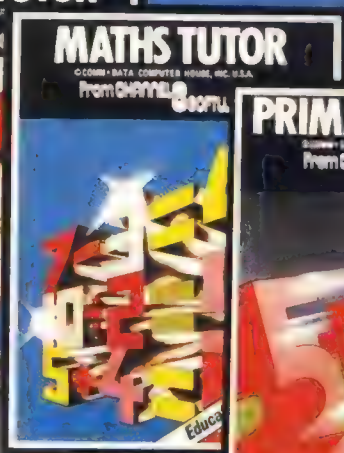
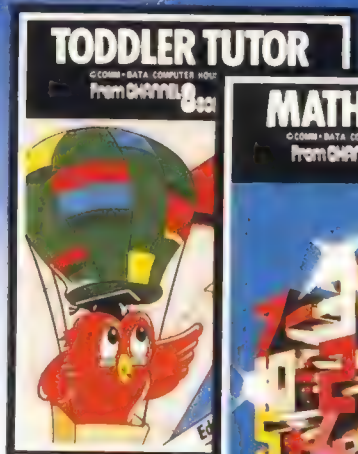
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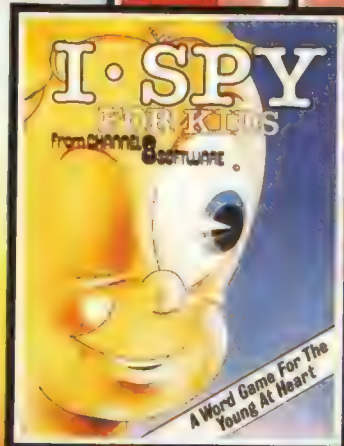
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Letters to BIG K

Jet Set Willy — The Last Poke

THE FOLLOWING *Jet Set Willy* loader will eliminate all moving objects, allows you to jump from room to room, lets you fall from any height, clears the attic bug and will suck you up walls as if in a lift. And, of course, gives you infinite lives.

10 CLEAR 32767 : LOAD — CODE
20 FOR A=43780 TO 45823 :POKE A,O: NEXT A
30 FOR A=46080 TO 49151 :POKE A,O: NEXT A
40 POKE 36477,1

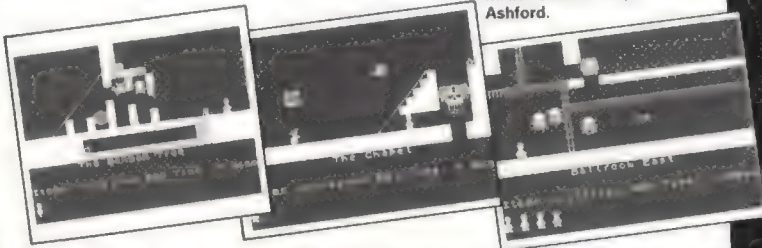
50 RANDOMIZE USR 33792

To jump from room to room, go down the first landing, to the room with the long flight of stairs and a flashing cross. Move to the bottom of the stairs and input WRITETYPED. Then press key 9 and you should jump to the off-lence. You should now be able to jump freely from room to room. Make sure you go in the right position — or you'll discover the consequences!

If you want to get sucked up a wall, stand beneath it and press the jump key. This takes some getting used to, and is not possible on all walls.

In the nightmare room, quickly press jump and forward keys as soon as you enter. This will allow you to collect the single, high-up object in the room. Then leave. There's nothing else. Remember you'll be invisible in this room, but don't worry, you can't get killed.

MARK CHARLTON,
Ashford.



Five's the limit?

I TOTALLY agree with Paul Bellamy's views (BIG K 5). All software is vastly overpriced. Why shouldn't we make copies at £5 a throw? NICHOLAS WATKINS, Wolverhampton

Piracy Schmiracy

IF "COMPUTER software is, in the main rubbish", why does pirate Paul Bellamy lower himself to copy it? Why publish the views of someone breaking laws like a common shoplifter? I see enough piracy in school. CHRIS HALL, Belfast.

● We publish Paul's views for the same reason we publish your views — the day we stop publishing views, we're dead.

Fair Play

IN REPLY to Paul Bellamy, we think that major software breakthroughs like 'The Hobbit' or 'Lords of Midnight' deserve their high prices because of development costs. However, it's at the £6-7 mark that people get 'ripped off', for games that are just tired variations on familiar themes.

We've got six adventure games retailing at £1.95. Sure — we want to make money, but we don't want a cynical public and a market that boils down to fierce piracy protection, minimal content, and resentful punters.

M. K. WHITE,
8th Day Software,
Wirral.

Ethereal

WHILST playing my short wave radio, I came across a series of high pitched noises. I recorded them and played them into the old CBM 64 — and was amazed when they

loaded. The result was a program jumble of confused characters and keywords. How can I translate these codes?

N. WHILLANS,
N. Ireland.

● Sounds like you ran into a bit of BASICODE, of which the sole official transmitter is the BBC. The Beeb will supply you with an interpreter. Alternatively, you might have been tuning in to some sinister hacker of the airways passing on pirated pulses to a fellow plunderer. In which case, don't tell the Beeb.

Bright — But Not Sharp!

I'VE only one thing to say about Mr. Bright, MP, who's trying to include our games in the Video Recordings Bill — he's stupid! KIERAN NUTBROWN, Huddersfield.

Hack Attack

I THINK the Bright Bill stinks. However, it could lead to a new breed of political games. How about *Revenge of the Mutant Tories*, or *Kinnock*

Kong? Every session of Parliament is a game of *Dungeons and Dragons*, after all. (We won't mention *Manic Miner*.) CAMERON BLACK, Glasgow.

Kwest For Kong

IN RESPONSE to Analechi Nivadi's quest for the best Commodore Kong — there's only one good Kong game for the Commodore. That's Anirog's.

ANDY CLARKE,
Warwickshire

King of the Kongs

THE ALL-TIME great Kong game is the arcade *Donkey Kong*, by Nintendo. NICK BARFOOT, Colehill, Dorset.

Anagram

HOW COULD you do this to me? My name is not Analechi Nivadi — it is Analechi Nnadi. A. NNADI, London.

- Improve your handwriting. Annaline Leech.

Big Kool

ALL NEW magazines pack their first issues with the best stuff, and then get really average. Big K, however, has stayed hilarious, and manages to pack in its point too. Your views are the same as mine, and I agree with all your Classic Games choices.

M. J. DAVIES,
Dyfed, Wales.

- We agree with your Classic Mags choice, too.

Talk to Me!

IS THERE an interface available to connect a CBM 64 to a Spectrum? We both write programs and it would save us a lot of time in translation.

C. BRIDGER & T. FLYNN,
Merseyside.

- Sorry, C. and T., but when have you ever heard of two rivals talking to each other?

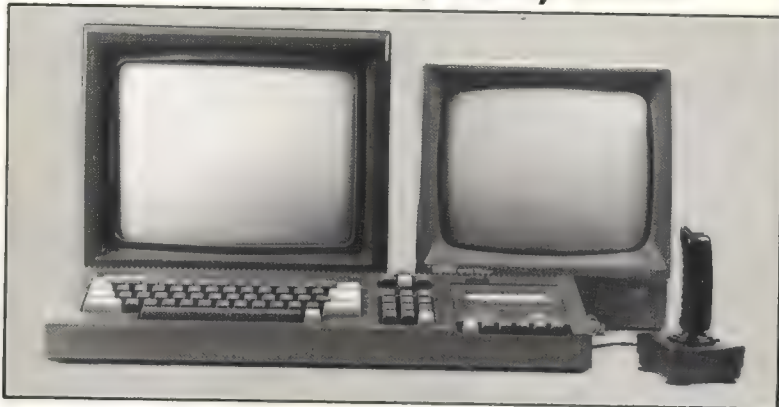
First Edition

DO YOU think that the first issue of BIG K could be worth some money? If so, how much?

NG WAI TONG,
Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia.

- YOU START the bidding. Ng old china, and we'll tell you if you're in with a chance.

Amstrad: Great Green, Costly Colour



AMSTRAD have made a mistake — the inclusion of the monitor in the price. If you buy the cheaper, green-screen model (£229) you lose one of the machine's best features. To get your colour back you must purchase a £30 modulator/power supply, and use your TV. So now you've got a redundant monitor.

Of course you could go for the colour model right from the start. But then £329 is above the average micro budget.

It would be better to hold the monitor, bung in a pair of joysticks and some software and run the thing off a TV. Surely most people have one of those?

NEIL OLNER, Doncaster.

- Good point, Neil — except that, as you say yourself, most people only have ONE TV. So when *Dynasty's* on, who gets the use of the Family VDU? *Les Parents*, every time. Also: TVs won't support 80-column display, and we think that Amstrad fancy their 'puter's chances as a small business micro (eventually).

Taking Shape

I DISCOVERED the following useful tricks whilst experimenting with my 48K Spectrum:

1. Type PLOT 128,88:DRAW 30,30:AE4 — a rotating shape appears on screen. By altering

the third number in the DRAW statement, you can change the size and shape of the object.

To disable the BREAK key during a BASIC program, type POKE 23659,0. But note that the program won't stop to give reports (errors etc).

ELTIN LUNNY,
Dublin.

Another Kim Bites The Dust

I'M SURPRISED to find that Kim Aldis couldn't manage *Jet Power Pack* (BBC). It's easy. I haven't quite finished, but I've got to the fourth garage.

SARA HIRST,
Leeds.

- Kim has this co-ordination problem, you see...

Shut-Out At Atari

HERE ARE some tips for Atari owners who want to protect their progs.

1. To disable the BREAK key, include the following after every graphics command: POKE 16,64:POKE 53774,64.

2. You can't disable the Atari's SYSTEM RESET, but POKE 580,1 will reset the cold start flag, thereby clearing any programs in RAM whenever the key is pressed.

3. For a 'run only' program, add the following line to the end of your programs: 32767 POKEPEEK (1381+256*PEEK (139)+2),0:SAVE"C":NEW

4. For disc drivers, substitute the SAVE "D:FILENAME".NEW Then type GOTO 32767 in the immediate mode and the program will be saved in a protected form. When loading use the command RUN"C:" or RUN "D:FILENAME". The program will then save and run itself. Pressing BREAK or loading in any other way will result in a lock up. Be careful — this method of prog protection won't even let you get a listing afterwards!

M. RAHMAN,
London.



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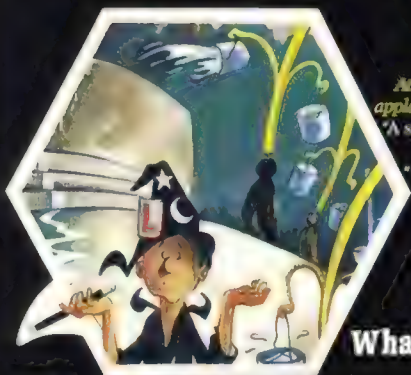
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